The Life of Muhammad

(P.B.U.H)

By

Mohammad Husayn Haykal

Translated by

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(Part I)

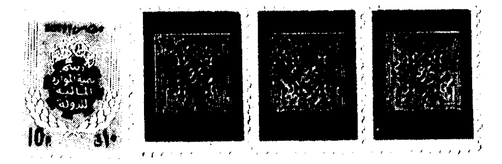
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The Life of
Muhammad
(P.B.U.H)
Part 1



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH,MOST GRACIOUS,MOST MERCIFUL

AL-AZHAR
ISLAMIC RESEARCH ACADEMY
General DEPARTMENT FOR
RESEARCH, WRITING&TRANSLATION

Mr.:- Sayed Attallah El Sayed Zahran

May Allah peace be upon you, Then with reference to your request concerning reviewing and inspecting The Life of The Prophet Muhammad (P.b.u.H) By M. H. Heikl II

We testify that the above mentioned book does not contradict with the Islamic Creed and there is no Prohibition of Printing it on your own expenses, With necessity of taking Care in Printing the Qur'anic verses and Prophetic Traditions.

Trans. Depat.
Diaa

General Manager

General Secretary of the Islamic
Research Center
Ali Abd El Baqi Shehata

إهداء

إلى مسلمي العالم .... خاصة مسلمي الغرب

أهديكم هذا الكتاب رداً على الإفتراءات التي نالت الإسلام ونبي الإسلام كي يدركوا عظمة الإسلام .

Dedication

To All Muslims all over the world, especially the Western Muslims.

It gives me honor to dedicate this book to you in replying to all Calumnies which has been raised against Islam and its Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to realize the magnificent of Islam.

[illegible]
٢٠٠٨/٧/١



Part I

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The Author in lines

1. He was born in the village of Kafer Ghanam, one of the villages of the center of Al-Snbellawn in Al-Dakhliya Government on 20th August in 1888 and recited Holy Qur'an at house of the Qur'an at the village.

2. At the age of seven, he joined at Al-Gamaliya primary school in Cairo and has got the primary Certificate in the year of 1900.

3. He joined at Al-Khedawiya school and finished this stage at the year of 1905.

4. Then, he joined at Al-Khedawiya school of Law, after he graduated at the year of 1909, then; he traveled to Paris to finish this study to get on Doctorate degree on his own expense.

5. Haykal stayed in Paris for three years and at the end of this period he got on the Doctorate degree from the University of Paris in the year of 1912 about "The general debt of Egypt".

6. Haykal returned from Paris and worked as a lawyer in Al-Mansoura city for a short time then he left this job and worked in the University in the year of 1917.

7. Haykal wrote many books such as "Zainab" that is considered the first Arabic story for him, also he wrote a book about "Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq" and a book about "Al-Farouk Umar bin Al-Khattab" (May Allah be pleased with them).

8. Haykal wrote a book entitled "The life of Muhammad" (P.B.U.H), this book considered one of his early Islamic works. In this book he talked about "The life

of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in a fine style. Logically and skillfully, he refuted the views of those who defame Islam from the Western writers on the "Biography of the Prophet (P.B.U.H). He concluded his book in two researches:

Islamic civilization as depicted in the Qur'an and compared it with the Western Civilization and defined in the second research to refute the allegation of some Orientalists about some Islamic situations.

Haykal died on 8th December in the year of 1956.

INTRODUCTION

A. Certitude's word

B. The word of sheikh M.M. Al-Maraghi (Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar)

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Certitude's word

Since the very early times of Islam up till now the Christian west is used to the enmity of Islam and its Prophet (P.B.U.H). The Western enmity culture and hatred against Islam and Muslims were combined and collected and settled in the inheritance of the Western culture throughout the history... that which became a means for the Western invader to cause enmity against the Islamic east by the old crusades and the contemporary modern imperialistic invasion which were used as means to load the public with hatred against Islam and Muslims. They scarified their wealth and souls in war for this invasion as it was said by Martin Luther "an important Christanaitany preacher".

This is what is happening today by the new and modern raid which is led by the President of America "Bush the son", the Zionism and the American religious right party against Islam. As the greediness can't move without telling lies, the greediness's of the west were covered with lies against Islam which is a struggling against to this greediness's.

Because the history of Western occupation the east preceded the appearance of Islam, the Western Roman and Byzantine made the false photos for the Eastern Egyptian Christianity and for eastern culture and civilization, this false photo gave Romans and Byzantines throughout ten centuries license to oppress and perish the people of the east and since the time of great Alexandar (356-323B.C) in the fourth century till the time of Heraql (610-641A.C) in the seventh century.

As Islam was the one which liberated- by its conquests- the land of the east from the exploitation and invasion of roman and Byzantine, liberated the concisenesses of the orientalists from persecution and religious and civilized vanquishing. The Western image that seeks enmity for Islam and its civilization,

its nation and its state began to be shaped in the western culture-religious and civil-since that time. The eastern civilization with its Christianity was the barbarian and uncivilized enemy in the sight of Byzantine Romans. When the eastern civilization became Muslim, it became the new enemy that replaced the old one completely, as the Western press did after the downfall of the communism in the last decade of the 20Th century. They considered Islam the enemy that replaced the evil communism"!

The Western enmity against Islam started since the appearance of Islam and liberating the East and Eastern people from the superintendence of the Romans.

In this aspect the English writer and the leader "Glob Bashes" (1897-1986) said his words that awaken the sleepy people":

The story of the Middle East problem goes back to the 7Th A.D century!! This means since the beginning of Islam and since that time the West is trying to snatch the East from Islam. They used all means, possibilities and they mobilized all efforts, powers, swerved nervously religious arrogance, covetousness, economic and political interests.

The most emerged of all of these means were the crusades the missionary and Christian in the Islamic states and spoiling the image of Islam and Muslims, the cultural war against Islam by showing suspicion against its creeds and holinesses and mockery of its Prophet (P.B.U.H) and trying to scorn the Holy Qur'an by burning and lowering it like what America had done in Iraq, Afghanistan and Gwantaname...etc also, by utilizing the tools of huge scientific revolutions like the internet and space channels. All of these means tried unsuccessfully to misinterpreted the chapters and verses of the Holy Qur'an and accusing Islam as terrorism and radicalism woman oppression and been prevailed by sword ...etc. but Allah the Almighty Who preserves the Holy Qur'an said:

﴿ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَـٰفِظُونَ ﴾

سورة الحِجْر آية ٩

We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and we will assuredly guard it (from corruption). (Al-Hijr: 9)

Concerning the Western ignoring of Islam it is enough to refer to the speech of the French orientalist"Jack Burk""1910-1995"That is what he said:

"Islam which is the latest of the three heavenly religions that milliard of mankinds all over the world believed in and which is closed to the west geographically and historical, is still and will continue up to this hour as an unknown cuisine and the rejected brother and the entirely accused for the West.

Jack Burk said also these words in 1995 before the events of Sept 2001A.D" as if he described the flood of the black hatred culture that fall down on Islam, his nation and its civilization immediately after the events of 11th sept., 2001. About the description of the west to the Arabs and Muslims in the Western culture, it is enough to mention some of the qualities that express the mass of hatred, enmity and envoy against Islam since the past centuries like "The agitated people that is well-known by rifling, blunder, sabotage, the animal, low graded race, the dogs and pigs. They described Islam as eastern paganism, Christian heresy, its people adore the trinity Mohammed, Tarfegant and Apollo.

They described the Messenger of Islam falsely as a magician, deceiver,

made the sexual contact lawful and he is the greatest god of the Arabs. They also described Qur'an that it was extracted from the Bible... "Old Testament" falsely, contradicts and full of grammatical historical and scientific faults.

There are few examples of the images of Islam, Qur'an and his Messenger (P.B.U.H) and the image of Muslims which was spreaded in the Western culture which is the root of the black enmity hatred against Islam, this culture of enmity disappears sometimes and appears another time when there is a crisis between west and Islam.

This used to happen while Muslims believe in all Prophets and massages; they don't differ between any of the messengers of Allah.

This declared war and western severe raid or campaign against Islam is not because of real or vital defect or disgrace in Islam as some others think, but it spring out – By the testament of Western scientists- from failure both of Western Christianity and Western Globalization. Also it is not because of ignoring the reality of Islam as most of Muslims think but it is because of the failure of the colonized west to do enter Islam, its nation and its world in the dark global tunnel in which the west entered. This matter made the majority speak culturally and religiously about the death of the west and the awaken of Islam."

These are the reality of the subjective and substantial reasons that were behind that western enmity against Islam according to Western Academic studies.

But why is all of this?? This goes back to the following factors:

1- Fearing of the Islamic spreading and expansion in the world, according to world statistics, Islam is the greatest prevailing in the world. That is because of its eternal miracle "The Holy Qur'an" which has not been misinterpreted or changed.

2- They know seriously that Islam is a religion, a state, civilization and a system of life. These are the secret of its power, vitality and spreading all over the world.

3- The Islamic conquering to Andalus and its effects an promoting the west

and the flourish of Islamic civilization that benefited the west that helped him to establish his material civilization according to its experimental scientific method and its plentiful sciences and culture that many of scientists 'thinkers and western researchers had confessed that it is a unique civilization . This made the fanatics excited.

4- The personality of the prophet (P.B.U.H) that made the scientists, philosophers, literary men, writers and wisers at west that made them write in their books mentioning him every time, they loved him because of his excellent personal, moral and civilized manner that pushed many to embrace Islam.

Finally: - There is no problem between Islam and the western man or the western science but the problem is within the political western superintendance institutions where in started fabrication against Islam since the appearance of Islam.

Islam and the demand of the world to it:

It is enough what the Author wrote about the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H) but we are going to speak about sides of this religion that was brought by the sealed of Prophets (P.B.U.H).

Islam as it was said by Mr., Mohammad Farid Wagdi:

It is the religion that was brought by the sealed of Prophets (P.B.U.H) Muhammad bin Abdullah, the Arabian Prophet (P.B.U.H). It is the most well-known greatest and undoubtful

religion. This religion was revealed in the 6th century A.D, this means it was revealed in time that the human brain attained majority and the souls became ready to accept a revelation that harmonized between religion and life and created brotherhood between this life and hereafter.

The religion that set minds free to discover the secret of existence and review the hidden secrets. What distinguishes Islam among the other religions that preceded it the declaration of its book that it is a common religion, Allah the Almighty said:-

﴿ وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَٰكَ إِلَّا كَآفَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿٢٨﴾ ﴾

سورة سبأ آية ٢٨

(We have not sent you but as a universal (Messenger) to all mankind, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin) (Saba: 28)

The prophet (P.B.U.H) wrote to the well – known kings of kingdoms, calling them to embrace Islam due to this Quranic text.

Were nations in need to a new religion?

The advent of Islam not only for Arabs but also for all people means that all nations on the earth are in need to a new religion so, how were the nations during the mission of Muhammad (P.B.U.H)?

How much were they in need to a new religion or to a great social event?

It is nice to give the reply from one of these who are non-Muslims so as not to be accused with inclination or described with exaggeration.

The researcher Mr. Jane La Bum" wrote in the preface of the index that was written for the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an in French, concerning this topic he said:

"For the man to understand quite all right the extent of any call he has to know quite well. The state of the caller to standardize this call or to evaluate his call he has to study the human side to what he has directed his efforts to have an effect on it.

This is the purpose of this brief note that concerns the Arabian legislator who established the Islamic university when Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was born in the 6th century; the atmosphere of the world was fall of clouds. There were plenty of infatuations and troubles. The people of Spain and south of France requested the help of emperor "Justinian" the emperor of Eastern Roman kingdom against king "klofis" and his catholic sons. They were forced to fight him to get rid of the authority of the leaders who brought them this aid thinking that they have the right of the conquerors not as protectors or helpers. In France itself the sons of "klofis" were blood shed persons and wars that were broken out between the Wazighonian Queen " Brnho " and francian Queen Firid Yagond historically were in fact a disaster and provoked calamity and sorrow.

But in England the " Anglo " people were struggling against " The Saxonians" to restore the land that they occupied and enslaved the offspring of " Kimros " who were the oldest occupiers to this island which nowadays is looking forward to be on top of nations by its power and industry while it was by that early time that was described by dark and savagery.

But about Italy: - The name of Roman, this great name had lost its ancient power and Rome the head of that huge broken statue that means "The kingdom of

Roman" with its turning over to be only a simple religious

center it is trembling, when remembering its magnification one day, the time it was an original religious center it prepared itself to be popery centre. That was what the policy of "Sharlaman" wanted it to be after two centuries time.

About the Greece kingdom that had forgotten its old. Magnificence as it was a part of the eastern Roman kingdom. By that time the East Europe used to be trouble maker for its south part from the beginning of the source of Ran river From the west side up to the mouth of the Danube River towards its East side .So, the Scandinavians, Mervin and Dane used to be crowded on the road that was passed by Gutians and Hunions who occupied " Traqia, Maqdonia, Laqdonia, Lombardi and Italy either by power or by deceiving.

"During that time Turkish appeared in deep Minor Asia. They stopped the Kingdom of Greece at the boarders of Qustantina.

But about Asia: It was not better than Europe the kingdom of Tebit and India which quoted the nations in Europe nowadays with their thoughts and their political and philosophical language and also the strangest social cases, were separated kingdoms be cause of internal and external wars and religious disputes. But the Northern side of the high Asian mount which belongs to Russia now, it was unknown absolutely. The Persian kingdom that was connected with the Arab situations especially after the rid of Alexandar AL Maqduni, it was fighting against Romanian Greece in Qunistantinaple who

were having the authorities over western Asia.

About Africa:- Those Romanian Greece themselves who were mixed by soldiers, traders and rulers. Who were?

Gathered from different parts – all gathered together to suck the blood of Egypt. They did their best to low down the knowledgeable Egypt with its old honor to be like a dead body

motionless and senseless. The same was the situation of the fertile regions in East Africa that they snatched from the hands of "AL Findalians".

In brief: The world was full of disturbances and savageness in all its angles. People used to depend on evil means more than depending on good means.

The more truthful and obedient were some leaders the more they broke out fire of wars and battles. They were not concerned with the kindness of hearts. They had no effect on hearts except for sometimes when seeking for booties and plundering nations, peoples, war people, humble needy people, poor farmers and masters. But not if for a slight ray of light and wisdom that came out from some hermitages of priests and if not for some philosophical germs that were away from the disputes and transferred from one spirit to another by some courage people, the Barbary would be prevailed quickly led by the arrogance of the leaders of the bestiality and life would be changed into complete savagery.

Nevertheless, there was one corner of the earth was not affected by any of these disputes. This was not because of its people's wisdom or broad mind but because of its geographical situation. It was so for that the disturbances of nations couldn't touch it. This corner is the Arabian Peninsula which was to hear about these disputes from far distance.

Even if any of these disturbances reached there, it would reach feeble

With no effect. It ignored the presence of India and China. Its relation didn't exceed the boundaries of the Persian countries.

The Arab peninsula didn't know about Persia but by their news of victory or defeating that resulted in returning some western valleys that were need to Russia back to comply namely with the Empire of Qunistantinople.

This late valley was very important for the Arab countries because their people used to go there for trading and there were some of the Arabs settled in colony in the western bank of the Euphrates and moved gradually up to Qazween Sea. One of the religious protection, were that it was separated from the Egyptian region which its south part was attacked by the Arab Shepherds and they didn't evacuate completely from there till after some of their late partners the Israelites had evacuated under the leaderships of Muses

(May peace be upon him) when the Egyptians restored the authority and treated them as beasts.

The only kingdom that had relation with the Arabs was the Abyssinia.

But about the northern part of Africa that were invaded two times and beside them there was the point of dispute between Romans and Ourtagians and between "the Qustantimian Greece" and Al Findalians.

: "Mr. Kusan Dauber Suzan" also said in his book "The History of the Arabs": The civilized Arabs of Bahrain and Iraq were under the domination of Persia but the Bedwins of them they were in reality free.

The Arabs of Syria were debtors to Roman. The tribes of the middle Arabs countries and Hagaz who were the kings of Bani Hammier, they were temporary sovergnity under the authority of the Persian kings but in fact they were in full independence.

Also, Jul-La Bum had said:-

Arabs were not more ready than others to accept any religion, Mr. Duze" said in his book " The History of the Arabs of Spain" There was – during the time of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) three religions in the countries of the Lord: The Mosaic, the Christianity and the idolatry. Jews who were followers to these religions were keeping their religion firmly and they were

severely spiteful against those who followed another creed. Yes, it was very rare during that time to find religious oppressions throughout the old history of the Arabs, but that was concerning the Jews only. Christianity had few followers and those who embraced it didn't know it but shallow acquaintance. This religion was full of secrets and awkwardness. It was too easy to prevail among sanative and scoopful people.

The Idolatry believers were the majority in the nation. Every tribe but family of them had its own god and those who believed that there is God existing, they concedered these gods intercessors to Him. They were respecting their priests and idols somehow. In stead of this they used to kill the priests the time their foretelling didn't came true or scorning them at the presence of their idols if they vowed slaughtering a sheep and changed it to a doe.

There were some Arabs who worshipped planets specially the Sun. Kenana worshipped the moon, Bani lakhm and Gorhom prostrated for Jupiter and children from Bani, Aqd believe in the planet Mercury, Banu Tay believe in sahila and Banu Qais Ailan directed towards yamenian dogstare "Sirius " Their Knowledge about what is beyond the nature depends on the position of their religious knowledge.

"Kusan Duber Sofal" said in his book "The History of Arabs" some of them believed in perishing of the man when he died. Some believed in the Day of resurrection and life after death. So, if one of their relatives died they would kill a she – camel at his grave or tie it and leaving it to die because of hunger thinking that the spirit when it leaves the body will be shaped like a bird called Al Hamah, or echo " It is a kind of owls that continue flying beside the grave wailing and bringing him the news of his sons.

If the dead were killed it would cry loudly saying "give me water", it would continue repeating these words till his family

Revenged by killing the murderer. Mr. La Bum said, after mentioning these two sentences which were said by the previous masters. The Arabs, customs and conducts appeared that they didn't pass the first stage of social life, if not the tribe was concerned completely with keeping their ancestral lineage. This was the matter that drew the attention. Also, their knowledge about laws and their brood language drew more attention. He said directly, the Arabs were fond of drinking wine. This appeared in their poet. They used to be very happy when drinking it and playing gamble. Also one of their customs that man could marry any number of women if he could provide them with good livings. He could also divorce them whenever he likes. The widow was concedered a part of her husband inheritance that was why there were matrimonial relations between the sons of the husband and stepmothers. Islam has forbidden this relation and considered it unlawful.

There was an awful custom more than these passed, it is killing the children Girls alive – means burying them alive.

All of this didn't mean that Arabs had no good conducts could be promoted. They liked freedom very much and they were very generous and fond of hospitality. The individuals who were among more primitive nations than the Arab nation who were scattered here and there in the Arab peninsula were very few in number. It appeared that they didn't bother themselves by calling for their creed. The Jews who were satisfied with their local selfishness like Chinese, Japanese and Egyptians never could see up till now the quality of affecting on others except by submitting to the laws of nations where they serve under its authority by financial matters. If there were some Arabs followed their creed that was resulted from sharing them their historic myths.

This share proved that the two nations were close and equal in loving earning livings and readiness for not to be shy of

committing any not of playing tricks and cunning to gain benefits.

But Christians used to come gradually to the Arab countries running away from the religious oppressions which were in Roman kingdom. There wasn't any light in their state could attract others. The Christians of Abyssinia nowadays are an example for that as a person who couldn't give up- by feeling noble creeds – his religion immediately.

"Thus Muhammad (P.B.U.H) came."

During these dark situations, among this hard generation. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was born on 29 of August 570 "The end of the orientalist words.

This report showed us that, the human world was in need for a severe event to pull them out of what they were in and enforced them to look round and think of setting themselves free from this narrow pass in which they had indulged themselves.

God had in His creation unchangeable sunnan. None of religions can be old and stop solidly without developing his believers but it sends the one who draws their attention to the lessons to renew what became old spoiled their matters.

Islam came and did this demanded result by the solutions that it set up and lowed down kingdoms and originated origins and destroyed of traditions. Moreover it made a revolution that shook the two states "Persian and Roman" in Asia and Europe.

This shaking was followed by weakness in all its old traditions and most of nations get rid of their oppression and led new life with development in two fields "Science and work"

What were the new origins that Islam carried nations by which it came over all present origins by that time?

The scientific and dogmatize origins are in dispute with life as they were in dispute with nations. The perfect one comes over the another and vanishes it and occupies the minds and spirits and still prevailing till another perfect one comes over it as it come over before and so on...

This is the Sunnah of Allah among nations since the beginning of creation up till now.

﴿ فَلَن تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ ٱللَّهِ تَبۡدِيلاً ۖ وَلَن تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ ٱللَّهِ تَحۡوِيلاً ﴿٤٣﴾ ﴾

سورة فاطر آية ٤٣

(But no change will you find in Allah's way (of dealing): no turning off will you find in Allah's way (of dealing)

(Fatir: 43)

These will more evil than falsehood itself. But if the truth was still on its special pure quality and wasn't spoiled by blemishes of falsehood there would no way for any falsehood to affect it however it may surround by.

Therefore if we say that Islam came and prevailed by its origins over all origins that were present during its time. This means that its origins were more perfect than these old origins and more benefitable for the nations.

There were civilizations presented in the world before Islam. When Islam came these civilizations were perfect. The Roman civilization overcome all states on the earth. There was no nation could confront its sovereignty except the Persian in Asia.

When going through the history of the Roman you could see wars broke up and kings followed one another and laws were enacted and origins were supported. Some ignorant historians

thought this as a supernature, but those who had knowledge had another view.

They noticed that this Roman civilization with all origins and laws that had been created and all countries that had been occupied all of these achievements were qualified by savagery. Its civilization was in need of evaluation and straightforwardness or it was in need of a calamity to turn it upside down.

It was written in Larose encyclopedia what is translated" What were overall systems of the Roman? They were the same savagery and cruelty arranged in laws. The side of the Roman favors like courage, cunning, farsighted, discipline and be completely faithful to the group all of these were the same like the favors of the armed robbers and thieves. Its task was covered with savagery cloth. You couldn't see except full evil and learning spite against foreigners and loss of human kindness.

Islam didn't overcame Romans and Persian not by the power of weapons and soldiers it defeated them by its undefeated origins and rooted teaching.

What were the old origins? And what are the Islamic origins? How did the second overcome the first and lead minds and spirits together?

"The Islamic origin: Sincerity between man and His Creator"

The man of the pervious creeds was under the custody of the priests even his secrets and thoughts. He couldn't take a decision concerning himself or the public or broken it without being approved by the religious man. If the matter stopped at this limit it would be like one group defeated another one in the vital affairs, but the most disturbed matter was that they separated between man and his Creator and made themselves middle man between the two. It was not enough for a man that he couldn't sell or do a contract or die without the presence of one of them.

Even they deprived him from praying Allah or repent from sin except by their intercession. By that time, if man wanted toadyism from Allah he should fill their hand with gold, and then they would permit him to supplicate Allah. If man refused to give them out and folded his hand they would exile him away from that presence and imposed on them that they had imprisoned the mercy of Allah not to reveal on him. By all of these false words and deeds the religious men overcome the minds of nations till they became like toys in their hands and like the small child hanged in mother's hand. This leads to stopping the movement of thinking and dryness of minds and breaking down the life of sense of feelings.

No doubt nations lived long time under a complete state of initiation under the custody till the time of Islam that came with this first origin which is sincerity between man and his Creator. It confirmed that Allah is very near to his slaves. He hears them if they call Him and responds them if they pray for him. Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِى عَنِّى فَإِنِّى قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ ٱلدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا۟ لِى وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا۟ بِى لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾ ﴾

سورة البقرة آية ١٨٦

(When My servants ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I respond to the prayer of every suppliant when he calls on Me: let them also, with a will, listen to My call, and believe in Me: that they may walk in the right way.) (Al-Baqarah: 186).

But Islam decided that Allah is the nearest one to His slaves and Allah the Almighty said:

﴿وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ ﴾ سورة ق آية ١٦

(We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein.)

(Qaf: 16)

Allah, the Almighty didn't put condition for accepting their worshipping through middle-men between man and his Creator. Every man has to perform his prayer and rites by himself, but the congregational prayers such as Friday prayer and Feast prayer, the man who leads these prayers is the prince himself or his vice. There is no condition whither the chief or his vice to be from a specific group or not. It is accepted if the vice is a Muslim man, farmer or manufacturer, since he could perform prayer knowing its conditions and rites.

By this Islamic Origin, the Sincerity between man and his Creator became free and none of the people will be better than him in front of Allah. This Origin was the first stone put by Islam in the foundation of the right human freedom.

The Islamic Origin: Establishing the general equality:

People before Islam were divided into three groups: Religious men, government men and those who joined them from soldiers and policemen, the third is the nation. The Religious men were the superior group followed by the government people in rank. The two groups used to utilize the third group in serving them and collecting their wealth to satisfy their desires under the name of religion and under the name of worldly authority.

When Islam prevailed it decided that people are equal. Their father is Adam and their mother is Eve. The

Prophet (P.B.U.H) said: no priority for Arab over non-Arab except by righteousness and good deeds.

Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقۡنَٰكُم مِّن ذَكَرٖ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلۡنَٰكُمۡ شُعُوبٗا وَقَبَآئِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوٓاْۚ إِنَّ أَكۡرَمَكُمۡ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ أَتۡقَىٰكُمۡۚ ﴿١٣﴾ ﴾

سورة الحجرات آية ١٣

(O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you.)

(Al-Hujurat: 13).

Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most of you and Allah has full knowledge and is well- acquainted with all things. By this equality the spiritual authority was vanished. This spiritual authority, how long it caused the peoples suffer and make them degrade. The priority of leaders and masters lessened. They didn't utilize their authority and inherited it to their offspring and relatives with no right. The balance of priority is good and real good conducts "The first caliph was obliged say in his speech: "O mankind! I came to the authority but I am better than you. I hoped if one of you had carried this responsibility not me. So if you found me wronged put me on the right path".

This second origin is a stone Islam had put in building the authority of the nation on which the peoples were raised up high to feel the social dignity and national superiority.

The origin of Islam: Establishing the consultation principles in Islam.

What you read in Rome and Greece history about forming the consultative council and compassing the constitutional system that was in reality a kind of tyrannizing because the authority was in the hands of powerful individuals. But the public people were still suffering as they were before establishining such councils and republics. They have no right to put the rules on the right path. The consultative in Athin and Rome councils were nothing but for the fortune of the noble group not others. Sometimes they tyrannize all people and sometimes they became a tool in the hand of the ruler using then in driving the public people to where he likes.

After the arrival of Islam it turned this system upside down and gave every person the right to watch the government and declare his opinion in the public affairs Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ ﴿٣٨﴾ ﴾ سورة الشورى آية ٣٨

(Their affairs by mutual Consultation) (Ash-Shura: 38).

And Allah the Almighty said

﴿ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي ٱلْأَمْرِ ﴾ سورة آل عمران آية١٥٩

(and consult them in affairs (of moment) (Al-Imran:159)

The Prophet made the religion as an advice; the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said "Religion is an advice. They said for whom O Messenger of Allah? He said: for Allah, his Messenger and the believers all of them.

His origin also decided that the command: Do well

and don't do bad is one of the obligations imposed on all great or low rank. When Allah narrated some events of the previous nations and mentioned what happened to them from disasters and shocks. The cause of that as Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ كَانُوا۟ لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَن مُّنكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ ۚ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا۟ يَفْعَلُونَ ﴾ سورة المائدة آية ٧٩

(Nor did they forbid one another the iniquities which they committed: evil indeed were the deeds which they did.) (Al-Ma'idah:79)

The Prophet (P.B.U.H) said :- you should invite to all that is good and forbid what is wrong otherwise Allah will send over you infatuations like black pieces of the very dark might that keep the patient at a loss." And the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said If any one of you sees abomination he should change it "to what is good" by his hand, if he couldn't, he should change it by his tongue, if he couldn't he should change it by his heart and this is the weakest of Iman"belief".

By this origin every Muslim comes to know that he has a share to direct his public affairs. He became not a tool in the hand of chives or a neglected body in the social building. How a nation will be if this high feeling grows into the heart of everyone and its effects prevailed in its nations and motionless.

The Origin Islam: (Happiness and punishment in the hereafter depends on deeds and self qualities not on intercessions and relatives)

People before Islam believed that the spiritual world is between the chieves of religion, no rejection to their will. They are the ones who cause happiness or suffering to people. In their hand there are rewards fire punishment,

nymphs and sons and torture and deprivation. The one who has no relation with them concedes himself in a loss the hereafter. Then he has to seek their satisfaction either by money or by blind obedience. The peoples adapted themselves to these falsehoods. That caused them to be despised and those who followed these religions like deaf tools in the hands of their chieves throw them wherever they like.

How these creeds afflicted their spirits and degraded their talents and saw that oppression and partiality became the preferable quality in life. Do you think by all of these affairs the balance of conducts could be straight forward and treatments should be in good order? Was there good fortune for these nations, in this life? With what they suffer from? Could they raise the standard of humanily? Or they could be the successors of Allah on the earth? Islam came to show the people that the happiness in this life and the hereafter depends on the personal deeds and relatives or intercessions and all means of partialities never help man. Allah – the Almighty said:

﴿ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ ﴾ سورة المدثر آية ٣٨

(Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds.)

(Al-Muddaththir: 38). And Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ وَأَن لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنسَـٰنِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُۥ سَوْفَ يُرَىٰ ﴿٤٠﴾ ﴾ سورة النجم الآيتان ٣٩-٤٠

(That man can have nothing but what he strives for; that (the fruit of) his striving will soon come in sight :)

(An-Najm: 39- 40)

Allah the Almighty also said about there who don't do good deeds

﴿ فَمَا تَنفَعُهُمْ شَفَٰعَةُ ٱلشَّٰفِعِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ ﴾ سورة المدثر آية ٤٨

(Then will no intercession of (any) intercessors profit them.) (Al-Muddaththir: 48). And Allah said

﴿ فَمَا لَنَا مِن شَٰفِعِينَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ ﴾ سورة الشعراء آية ١٠٠

(Now, then, we have none to intercede (for us)

(Ash-Shu'ara:100)

The Prophet (P.B.U.H) said "Do Fatima, I'll never profit you anything from Allah)

It was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an that Noah interceded for his son but Allah didn't respond him because his son was not good doer. Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ وَنَادَىٰ نُوحٌ رَّبَّهُۥ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ ٱبْنِى مِنْ أَهْلِى وَإِنَّ وَعْدَكَ ٱلْحَقُّ وَأَنتَ أَحْكَمُ ٱلْحَٰكِمِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ قَالَ يَٰنُوحُ إِنَّهُۥ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَٰلِحٍ ﴾ سورة هود الآيات ٤٥- ٤٦

(And Noah called upon his Lord, and said; "O my Lord! Surely my son is of my family! And your promise is true, and you are the Justest of Judges!" He said: "O Noah! He is not of your family: for his conduct is unrighteous.) (Hud: 45-46)

By this Origin Islam vanished all the rest of the authority of the spiritual chieves and gave the soul the

power to get rid of dominators. This origin declared the acknowledgment of man and the readily of man's situation in his society and his world. It gives man self confidence and confidence in soul's power that is enough to promote man up to what he aims at of happiness in this life and the hereafter.

The Origin of Islam: The confession of the rights of mind and science:

People before Islam believed that religion and mind are opposite, never harmonizes. That was because of what they used to see of severe differentiation between their creeds and minds. They exceeded that limit when they said that the mind is inferior to match with the superiority of creeds. The chieves of religion increased their misguidance in this regard by whispering in their ears that the realties of religion must be beyond perceive of the mind because it reveals to them from a spiritual world that differs from their sensitive world.

It was not clear to these nations that if these false superstitions were true no man can't distinguish between what is good and bad of essays.

It was written in Laros encyclopedia chapter: chieves of religions deceive people that the mind is inferior to understand the religious matters.

"If we said that righteousness needs to believe in the reasonable things, they would say no, no. Then they are seeking for degrading the human mind which assumed to have the right of discrimination between good and evil and justice and unjustice.

When they cause the mind to be blind and the inner sight was so covered that you could see the super nature as if it is usual affair and think the white color black and

think the vice is a virtue, then the religion comes to say obey. Whom to obey? Do we obey the mind? Do we obey the natural obligations, the hearty emotions? The real aims that benefits humanity and results from these roles itself? No, but obey blindly the one who rules in the name of Allah even if he ordered you to kill either our ruler or father or do general killing in this case you would have neither spirit nor conscience but you are dead for the sake of Allah.

The end.

When Islam prevailed it decided that the mind is main source of charging with a duty and entrusted to differential between right and wrong and can identify similarities. Allah mentioned the mind in many verses of the Qur'an.

Allah the Almighty said

﴿ أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ ﴾ سورة يس آية ٦٨

(Will they not then understand?) (Ya-Sin: 68).

And Allah said

﴿ وَقَالُوا۟ لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِىٓ أَصْحَـٰبِ ٱلسَّعِيرِ ﴿١٠﴾ ﴾

سورة الملك آية ١٠

(They will further say: "Had we but listened or used our intelligence, we should not (now) be among the Companions of the Blazing Fire!") (Al-Mulk: 10).

Allah the Almighty also said:

﴿ وَتِلْكَ ٱلْأَمْثَـٰلُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ ۖ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَآ إِلَّا ٱلْعَـٰلِمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ ﴾

سورة العنكبوت آية٤٣

(And such are the Parables we set forth for mankind, but only those understand them who have knowledge.)

(Al-ankabut: 43)

The Prophet (P.B.U.H) said "Religion is mind and no religion for the one who has no mind" and he also said" O, mankind be reasonable about your Lord and be advisable by mind you could know what you have been forbidden not to do and know that it helps you in the sight of Allah" and the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said: Don't be admired by a man committed" Islam, till you understand what his mind determinded"

Group of people praised a man with exaggeration in the presence of the Prophet (P.B.U.H), the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said to them, how is the mind of the man? They replied: Do we inform you about his striving in worshipping and kinds of good deeds he committed and you ask us about his mind? The Prophet (P.B.U.H) said: verily the silly man has more impaction than the dissipation of the unchaste. Worshippers will be raised up high steps near Allah according to the measurement of their minds.

Islam didn't stop at this limit of raising the virtue of the mind but gave it the unlimited authority to judge creeds. So it demanded every believer to prove the reality of his creed. The multitude of knowledgeable people even said that. The faith of the imitator is not accepted. Allah the Almighty proved that. Allah said in demanding this proof:

﴿ وَمَن يَدْعُ مَعَ ٱللَّهِ إِلَـٰهًا ءَاخَرَ لَا بُرْهَـٰنَ لَهُۥ بِهِۦ فَإِنَّمَا حِسَابُهُۥ عِندَ رَبِّهِۦٓ ﴿١١٧﴾ ﴾ سورة «المؤمنون» آية ١١٧

(If anyone invokes, besides Allah, any other god, he has no authority therefore; and his reckoning will be only

with his Lord!) (Al-Mu'minun:117). And Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ قُلْ هَاتُوا۟ بُرْهَٰنَكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴾

سورة البقرة آية ١١١

(Say: "Produce your proof if you are truthful.")

(Al-Baqarah: 111) and said concerning blaming these who accept suppositions and fancies

﴿ وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا ۚ إِنَّ ٱلظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِى مِنَ ٱلْحَقِّ شَيْـًٔا ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلِيمٌۢ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴾ سورة يونس آية ٣٦

(But most of them follow nothing but conjecture truly conjecture can be of no avail against Truth. Verily Allah is well aware of all that they do.) (Yunus: 36).

And Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ وَإِن تُطِعْ أَكْثَرَ مَن فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا ٱلظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴾

سورة الأنعام آية ١١٦

(Were you to follow the common run of those on earths, they will lead thee away from the Way of Allah. They follow nothing but conjecture: they do nothing but lie.) (Al-An'am: 116)

"Allah glory be to Him" clarified the danger of believing without using the mind and knowledge and He reviewed the greatness of the acknowledgement about that. Allah said:

﴿ وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِۦ عِلْمٌ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلسَّمْعَ وَٱلْبَصَرَ وَٱلْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْـُٔولًا ﴿٣٦﴾ ﴾ سورة الإسراء آية ٣٦

(And pursue not that of which you has no knowledge; for every act of hearing, or of seeing, or of (feeling in) the heart will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning). (Al-Asra':36)

By this Origin the minds became free from the captivating false creeds. The religion appeared for the first time supporting the mind to think the convictions and defining treatments. It began a new era as the religion shared in the scientific resolutions after being neglected in imaginative comers. This origin promoted nations in the field of understanding and superiority against the natives of falsehood and deceiving.

Larus said in his encyclopedia: "if we searched without any fancy or purpose – for the cause of the promotion that accrued in the material ideological and conductive world. Since the childhood of the mankind up till time we could see it is the freedom of mind begining from being oppressed.

Larus also said in his encyclopedia: "since the time of reformation up till French revolution the debates continued between the mind and these who were pressing over the mind since old times and those who set mind free to forget about the passed legends and drawing new plan for the future. The French revolution started to repair what was destroyed from the walls of the association and teaching the Youth became very important and bussing their minds.

The Islamic origin: The combination between religion and Citizenship:-

Man as he was accustomed to love his soul was pushed to gain for himself what he can of physical perfection and bodily desire.

He defends himself by all means against what afflict his existence. He could obtain most of his desires by what he has been farrowed as the very far immaterial power still he is struggling to obtain it by legal means.

Upon that man was created and he achieved some of these aims throughout different ages, but the chieves of religion to central the nation and to put them under their service the feared if the bodily happiness, attempted man to get rid of their chains and domination they would lose their dignity. So they mixed the teachings of religion on with what belongs not to them like calling for humiliations and misery and made them like monasticism and asterism. Yes, Allah sent some messengers calling for the eternal monasticism in the life and its pleasures, but this was because of special reasons not because the religion by its nature is against material benefits and enamels the badly happiness. The nations who kept holding this vitiated religion and its teachings its followers were degraded to the very low rank and because the weakest people in the vital struggling.

It was rooted in the souls that the religion is opposing every work leads to the physical pleasure so, the suspicions and doubts succeeded and its teachings opposed the human creation. The chieves of the religion kept bolding their origins. So they kept on vanishing every trial of demanding development. The religion became a tool for punishment and oppression. War didn't stop between them and the ones calling for civilization. They

gain total victory, that is why the sources of knowledge were dried up and its well-informed men disappeared. So the world became in black dark of ignorance and blindness.

When Islam prevailed it decided that religion is not against the civilization but it is its real guide. Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ ٱللَّهِ ٱلَّتِىٓ أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِۦ وَٱلطَّيِّبَٰتِ مِنَ ٱلرِّزْقِ ﴿٣٢﴾ ﴾ سورة الأعراف آية ٣٢

(Say: Who has forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of Allah, which He has produced for His servants, and the things, clean and pure, (which He has provided) for sustenance?) (Al-Araf: 32)

Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ رَبَّنَآ ءَاتِنَا فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً ﴿٢٠١﴾ ﴾

سورة البقرة آية ٢٠١

(Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter) (Al-Baqarah: 201) And Allah said:

﴿ ۞ وَقِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ ٱتَّقَوْا۟ مَاذَآ أَنزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ ۚ قَالُوا۟ خَيْرًا ۗ لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا۟ فِى هَٰذِهِ ٱلدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ ۚ وَلَدَارُ ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ ۚ وَلَنِعْمَ دَارُ ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ ﴾ سورة النحل آية ٣٠

(To the righteous (when) it is said, "What is it that your Lord has revealed?" They say, "All that is good." To those

who do good, there is good in this world, and the Home of the Hereafter is even better and excellent indeed is the Home of the righteous) (Al-Nahl: 30).

And Allah the Almighty also said:

﴿ وَلَا تَنسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ وَأَحْسِن كَمَآ أَحْسَنَ ٱللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ ﴿٧٧﴾ ﴾ سورة القصص آية ٧٧

(But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, (nor forget your portion in this World: but do good, as Allah has been good to you,) (Al-Qasas: 77)

Because science was the factor of establishing civilization Islam decided demanding it for every Muslim man and woman.

Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ وَقُل رَّبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا ﴿١١٤﴾ ﴾ سورة طه آية ١١٤

(Say,"O my Lord! Advance me in knowledge.)

(Ta-Ha: 114)

He said:

﴿ وَمَآ أُوتِيتُم مِّنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٨٥﴾ ﴾ سورة الإسراء آية ٨٥

(It is only a little that is communicated to you, (O men!)

(Al-Asra':85) And He also said:

﴿ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِى ٱلَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩﴾ ﴾

سورة الزمر آية ٩

(Say: "Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?) (Az-Zumar: 9)

The Prophet (P.B.U.H) said: "Demanding knowledge is compulsory every Muslim male and female and he (P.B.U.H) said also

"The one who learned knowledge and kept it secret Allah will put fire in his mouth in the Day of Judgment"

The Islamic Origin: The man became to know that the human existence has unchangeable ways.

Before the presence of Islam people imagined that the human groups are like the free herd of animals: shepherded by their herdsmen who dive them to where they like and the roles of the history in their sight were nothing but controlled by chieves and leaders. They could change and alternate them according to what their policy needed. They saw nothing but their leaders, when the see a sight of good or noticed a single aim they come to know that their leaders are capable to alternate all matters .as they like and when they like. This slavery was resulted from this creed, When Islam comes, it decided to the human existence has unchangeable means and ways: .

These suntans are still doing according to the discipline that was imposed for them. Till they reached the aim they search for the human groups. All in all are living. They have roles to play and statuses concerning them. Each state has its own relations. They must have means of assembly and group qualities.

This different view between the ancient people and Islam has a very serious matter in the sight of the scientific realities and its effects on philosophical teachings. The ancients used to the chieves as if they were gods who controlled their pleasance and misery and there guidance and misleading. This misleading in creed made those leaders great and honorable and the souls of those peoples were humiliated and oppressed.

Islam decided that nations and their kings are under the affection of a dominated power belonging to a general rule that organizes their states and readiness.

Islam aims at reforming the affairs and promoting the souls not the dominated leaders because it knew that they have no power to do any change but they are only a trace of the traces of the conditions of nations. It awakens and stimulates them to perform their duties and save their existent by their self power and personal will.

Qur'an had plenty of verses that preach, restrain provoke desires and intimidate. Qur'an doesn't address only leaders and upper classes but it addresses all with out exception Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ قُوٓاْ أَنفُسَكُمۡ وَأَهۡلِيكُمۡ نَارٗا ﴿٦﴾ ﴾

سورة التحريم آية ٦

(O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire) (Al-Tahrim: 6)

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ قَدۡ جَآءَكُم بُرۡهَٰنٞ مِّن رَّبِّكُمۡ ﴿١٧٤﴾ ﴾

سورة النساء آية ١٧٤

(O mankind! Verily there hath come to you a convincing proof from your Lord) (An-nisaa':174)

Qur'an didn't mention those masters but when referring to the submition of nations to the surrender of their leaders and to the inclination of their masters. Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ وَقَالُواْ رَبَّنَآ إِنَّآ أَطَعۡنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبَرَآءَنَا فَأَضَلُّونَا ٱلسَّبِيلَا۠ ﴿٦٧﴾ ﴾

سورة الأحزاب آية ٦٧

(And they would say: "Our Lord! we obeyed our chiefs and our great ones, and they misled us as to the (right) path.) (Al-Ahzab: 67)

Allah the Almighty also considered this one of the traces of their inclinations from the right.

Allah glory be to Him " said:

﴿ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نُوَلِّي بَعْضَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ بَعْضًا ﴿١٢٩﴾ ﴾

سورة الأنعام آية ١٢٩

(Thus do we make the wrong-doers turn to each other)

(Al-An'am:129)

Allah the Almighty directed the people to utilize the power that Allah had put within themselves if they want to change their conditions and their affairs. Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا۟ مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ ﴿١١﴾ ﴾

سورة الرعد آية ١١

(Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls) (Al-Ra'd:11).

No doubt that this origin is the strongest stimulation for the guidance of nations to the real means to obtain their pleasure and raising up to get their perfection. If nations come to know that their happiness and pleasure are in their hands and their different matters are the fruits of their deeds they never depend on anything but on their struggling to change their matters and to complete their existence by the power that is within themselves.

The nations that are holding firmly and stick completely to this social origin they will never depend on anyone whatever

honor and greatness he has. This origin helps people to achieve real freedom and democracy. So, where are the west Democracy comprised that?

The verses that prove what we have said that Islam decided that the human existence had unchangeable means and rites. Allah said:

﴿ سُنَّةَ ٱللَّهِ فِى ٱلَّذِينَ خَلَوْا۟ مِن قَبْلُ ۖ وَلَن تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ ٱللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا ﴿٦٢﴾ ﴾ الأحزاب آية٦٢

(Such was) the practice (approved) of Allah among those who lived aforetime: no change will you find in the practice (approved) of Allah.) (Al-Ahzab: 62).

And Allah said:

﴿ قُلْ سِيرُوا۟ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ ٱنظُرُوا۟ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَـٰقِبَةُ ٱلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١١﴾ ﴾ سورة الأنعام آية١١

(Say: "Travel through the earth and see what was the end of those who rejected Truth.) (Al-An'am:11)

The Origin of Islam: Attracting man's attention to the Order of nature and its hidden secrets.

Chiefs of religion prohibited nations to book into universe except into what concerns worship and deals with what helps to perform its rites and obligations. The Assyrians observed the planets to know times of worship. The ancient Egyptians were skilled in manufacturing paints .Photographing, sculpture and building gods and building pyramids for their dead kings.

There is no religion among our hand calls man to look into nature and studying its secrets and discovering its secret to

utilize this in developing their matters and developing its existence, except Islam. As when it made its aim to promote man and to bring out his hidden power it encored man to look into the universe. Allah said:

﴿ قُلِ ٱنظُرُواْ مَاذَا فِى ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ﴿١٠١﴾ ﴾

سورة يونس آية ١٠١

(Say: "Behold all that is in the heavens and on earth) (Yunus: 101).

Allah also said:

﴿ أَفَلَا يَنظُرُونَ إِلَى ٱلْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ ﴿١٧﴾ وَإِلَى ٱلسَّمَآءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ ﴿١٨﴾ ﴾ سورة الغاشية الآيتان ١٧-١٨

(Do they not look at the Camels, how they are made? And at the Sky, how it is raised high?) (Al-Ghashiyah: 17-18)

And He also said:

﴿ إِنَّ فِى خَلْقِ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَٱخْتِلَـٰفِ ٱلَّيْلِ وَٱلنَّهَارِ لَـَٔايَـٰتٍ لِّأُوْلِى ٱلْأَلْبَـٰبِ ﴿١٩٠﴾ ﴾ سورة آل عمران آية ١٩٠

(Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of Night and Day, there are indeed Signs for men of understanding.) (Al-Imran: 190).

No doubt that looking into universe leads to discovering its secrets and observing its orders. This leads nations to establish organized that can follow. And practicing themselves on how to imitate the creation of Allah in perfection and marvelous creation. The Muslim nation was the one who did according to

this origin so thousand of scientists were skilled; they raised up the standard of physics and became high rank in their history.

They didn't take it as an immaterial subject but they made it a practical subject and utilized it in developing their civilization till it reached a limit not had been reached by any nation before. European are still translating from their book what made them understand that Arabs had reached a great rank in natural sciences not hah been reached by any other nations before.

The Islamic origin: Confession of man's inclinations and emotions: Inside man there are different inclinations and great amount of sentimentals".

All are instinctive and natural been in his creation to complete his creation and connect him with what he needs and to reach the highest level of civilization. Man inclines to what keeps for him as a person such as food, clothing. And he inclines to preserve his race by marriage and social life, but because of the power that was combined in him he couldn't stop himself at these limits of necessities. That is why he was infatuated in some kinds of his food, clothing and water. He is still on this state of rashness gaining new knowledge that causes him to discover secrets and unknown knowledge. His faithfulness to these infatuations may be taken him to calamities that destroy many of them. But some of them benefit from these inclinations when developing and promoting themselves by that new knowledge and means of tricks.

On this, man was brought into being and from this, his civilization and knowledge will came and increase till they reach the perfection that raise him over the level of ignorant animals.

Before Islam, there were religions restricting these inclinations by all sort of restriction and deprivation such as considering marriage as an evil act that must be carried out. These conduct and behaviors from these religions were the cause

to break down the power of the human soul, depriving them from it from using all its means to create marvelous materials in the world of sensations.

Islam came and confessed with the right of these natural inclinations. It didn't ask man for anything but one quality that is to be straight forward when doing such natural inclinations.

Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ وَكُلُوا۟ وَٱشْرَبُوا۟ وَلَا تُسْرِفُوٓا۟ ۚ ﴿٣١﴾ ﴾ سورة الأعراف آية ٣١

(Eat and drink: but waste not by excess) (Al-A'raf:31).

It didn't forbid him to defend himself by using power and being simple in utilizing land because he knows that war was compulsory amonginations but it plays a role that is why Islam asked the fighters to be just not to extravagate in satisfying sprits of revenge. Islam first decided the role of defense.

Allah said:

﴿ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ ٱللَّهِ ٱلنَّاسَ بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لَّفَسَدَتِ ٱلْأَرْضُ ﴿٢٥١﴾ ﴾

سورة البقرة آية ٢٥١

(And did not Allah check one set of people by means of another, the earth would indeed be full of mischief)

(Al-Baqarah: 251)

Also He said concerning the compulsory of performing justice in wars Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوٓا۟ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١٩٠﴾ ﴾

سورة البقرة آية ١٩٠

(But do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors.) (Al-Baqarah: 190)

By this origin Islam kept for all his followers all the qualities of the alive nations that ready to be promoted gradually to reach the human perfection.

If the early Arabs hah faced these natural inclinations by fanaticism and ascetics and not to confrontate the power by power alike they would have been lived weak and died under persecution of these who had power and upper hand. But as they had preformed these glorious deeds by building this marvelous civilization, establishing great state and preserving the inheritance of the world of knowledge and wisdom. They didn't vanish and downfalls like any other nations that were weak and needy.

Some of the oppressor and Persecutors considered the Permition of war and struggling in Islam one of the defects and defames in Islam and every divine inspiration must get rid of these defects forgetting that.

First: The creed of Moses and his legislation allowed and permitted war and struggling on a very scale and intensive power. It was written in the old Testaments "Torah" that the time Muses had overcome a nation he destroyed its people and didn't leave even its animals alive.

This legislation was considered as inspirations most of those who persecuted Islam from that side.

Second. War is one of the phenomenons of disputing and struggling for being and this struggling in still a human means and way of life that was imposed by the mischief in the construction of society. So if Islam forbided it that means it forbided its followers to defend themselves and their countries and forced them to be vanished and

decayed. We still can see by our eyes that nations are in a continue disputes and victory is based on the armed forces and life is in the hand of the one who owns the means of defending himself and his country.

The Origin of Islam: unifying the world in the circle of treatments.

One who gives glance to the previous religions before Islam could see the national egoism very clear in their teachings such as, It is illegal to transgresses the followers of these religions and legal for other nations to be transgressed. That is why the enmity was created between the different peoples and people inherited these conducts generation after generation, even the one of them prefers to see a wild animal not to see a man believes not in his creed .

The treatments among these nations that differ in creeds were affected according to the power of these harmful teachings and their effects on their minds. That was the cause of delaying the material interests and increasing the harmful raids. Each of these nations that differed in creeds mere trying to exterminate one another for nothing but to purify the earth from their being.

Islam didn't lead that way of these nations but it aimed at unifying the world. It gave every nation its freedom in believing in what they like of creeds.

It imposed on its followers origins concerning this matter. It informed them that the difference between nations in belief is a matter demanded by the system of the universe. It is only refers to Allah the Almighty. It is impossible to unify the whale world under one belief or creed.

Allah said:

﴿ وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ ٱلنَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَٰحِدَةً ۖ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾ إِلَّا مَن رَّحِمَ رَبُّكَ ۚ وَلِذَٰلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ ﴾

سورة هود الآيتان ١١٨- ١١٩

If your Lord had so willed, He could have made mankind one People: but they will not cease to dispute, except those on whom your Lord has bestowed His Mercy: and for this did He create them) (Hud: 118-119).

"Muslims come to know by this verse that this difference was wanted by Allah for wisdom. He knows and nations will be like that till the command of God comes. When this command of Allah revealed all the hatreds of the hearts stop and left what concerns Allah for Allah. They followed the words of Allah as He said:

﴿ لَّا يَنْهَىٰكُمُ ٱللَّهُ عَنِ ٱلَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَٰتِلُوكُمْ فِى ٱلدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُم مِّن دِيَٰرِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوٓا۟ إِلَيْهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٨﴾ ﴾ سورة الممتحنة آية ٨

(Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loves those who are just.) (Al-Mumtahanah: 8).

Allah commanded the followers of Islam to deal kindly and justly with those who didn't believe in Islam still they didn't fight them for their faith and didn't drive them out of there homes . Allah proved that by saying after this verse:

﴿ إِنَّمَا يَنْهَىٰكُمُ ٱللَّهُ عَنِ ٱلَّذِينَ قَٰتَلُوكُمْ فِى ٱلدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُم مِّن دِيَٰرِكُمْ وَظَٰهَرُواْ عَلَىٰٓ إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَن تَوَلَّوْهُمْ ۚ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ ۝ ﴾ سورة الممتحنة آية ٩

(Allah only forbids you, with regard to those who fight you for (your) Faith, and drive you out, of your homes, and support (others) in driving you out, from turning to them (for friendship and protection). It is such as turn to them (in these circumstances), that do wrong.) (Al-Mumtahanah: 9).

By this verse Muslim has no way to bear spite against those who contradict him in religion still they didn't fight against Muslims to drive them out of their religion. Islam ordered its followers to deal kindly and justly with them.

The history of Muslims proved throughout their time that they had originated these conducts in their souls. They never destroyed or exterminated any nation for a religious purpose or persecuted any of group of people because of a contradiction of religion. They allowed those under their authority to practice there religions and teach them to their children. They respected all of them as they respect there companions. They didn't prevent the bells of churches to ring beside the minarets of mosques. Moreover, Islam increased this relation by allowing its followers to sit them with condole them and share them their pleasure.

The prophet (P.B.U.H) was an ideal guide to his nation. It was narrated that he stretched his garment for a Christian guests to sit on. It was proved that he gave his armour in pledge at one of the Jews in Medina because of being debated to him. This armour was returned back by his successore after his death (P.B.U.H)

Islam strengthened this relation by permitting Muslims to get married to a non Muslim woman from "The people of the book" and because of the infatuation Islam forbided a Muslim woman to marry a non Muslim man. It is a reality that Muslims in the early time of Islam were brought is up while religion was a strong controller that controlled their feelings. There were nothing for Muslims to be blamed moreover, when knowledge and sciences were spreaded among them and they became masters in researches and compilation of books they didn't become proud and incline prejudicing against somebody's rights. On the contrary, they added more brilliancy to their efforts. They Protected the scientists and knowledgeable persons of the other creeds and showed them mere respect up to the extent that doctors of the caliphs and leaders were among them such as" Bushtit, " the doctor of " AL– Rashid and AL Mammon and many others from among Christians and Israelites.

This Islamic origin is considered by itself as a sign that this religion true and authenticity. this religious tolerance was never been known in the whole world up till now and the recent Europe with what it had achieved of science and civilization it still inclining far from this noble side in many cases We can see now, how a Muslim is persecuted in the western countries in many cases.

The Islamic Origin: The confession of the statue of development.

There is no religion of these religions which had passed Islam one can raise up the head or be proud at promoting mankind more than Islam. It in interested in permitting mankind to obtain all what are benefitable in this life.

The previous religions connected the religious affairs on a historic or the death of their leader. They look back in

performing their orders and forbiddens and their nature demands man to be one of the early ages by heart, feelings and aims. No harm if this man became in the lowest disagree of cruelty and oppression.

It is true that these religions had prevailed for ages but when science and knowledge were created and their state were supported these religions vanished from the surface of the earth if there were no endowments are still belonging to their leaders these religions would never find representations in any civilized country now.

Islam contradicted all of these religions as it confessed of the statue of development and considered man was derived to a for civilized and not have been achieved yet.

To fix this origin in its follower's hearts and minds it cut off all the relations between them and previous nations except from the historical side. It didn't depend his teaching on a matter had passed the time of revelation but He said about the relation existed between us and the previous nations.

Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُم مَّا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْـَٔلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ سورة البقرة آية ١٣٤

(That was a people that have passed away. They shall reap the fruit of what they did and you of what you do! Of their merits there is no question in your case) (Al-Baqarah: 134)

By this verse Islam had cut off every relation between this nation and those passed it concerning creeds. It determined that every nation had reaped what it did and the previous one would never been asked about the one came after and vice –versa.

As the statue of promotion by itself has no way but the development of a man in the fields of science that result in the literary and material development in all its shapes. Islam declared that the knowledge that nation had gained in very little and can't help to reach the great cases or solving the complicated matters.

Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ وَيَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلرُّوحِ ۖ قُلِ ٱلرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّى وَمَآ أُوتِيتُم مِّنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٨٥﴾ ﴾ سورة الإسراء آية ٨٥

(They ask you concerning the Spirit (of inspiration). Say: "The Spirit (comes) by command of my Lord: of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you, (O men!)

(Al-Isra': 85)

After it had determined that science which they had obtained was little it showed them that science had a continuous and renewal supply. Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ وَقُل رَّبِّ زِدْنِى عِلْمًا ﴿١١٤﴾ ﴾ سورة طه آية ١١٤

(Say, (O my Lord! advance me in knowledge.)

(Ta-Ha: 114)

This origin is considered as an open confession with the statute of promotion. Muslim had achieved its aim. They didn't act reluctantly in seeking knowledge in any of their ages but they acted as one man practiced the useful knowledge and perfect manufacture and combined between the civilizations of parsian, Romans, Greeks and Indians.

The Islamic origin. A report shows that the religion was legislated for the welfare and the interest of the people not for exploiting and humiliating them.

Islam cultivated in the spirits of its followers that it was legislated for their interest and revealed for promoting them.

Worships which Allah obligated on his slaves and the traditions that Allah commanded his prophet with are not but a means for spiritual benefits, these benefits are results of performing worship.

Worship itself means nothing without its performance or putting it into practicing. E.g. Prayer with all its components as lowing down, prostration and what comes before as ablution was not legislated for itself but for the spiritual benefits and the mastership's supplies that follows its performance. This is like all legislated worships and obligated devoutness.

Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ مَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُم مِّنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَٰكِن يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُۥ عَلَيْكُمْ ﴾ سورة المائدة آية ٦

(Allah does not wish to place you in a difficulty, but to make you clean, and to complete His favor to you)

(Al-Ma'idah:6)

Allah said clarifying the sagacity of performance prayer"

﴿ إِنَّ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ ٱلْفَحْشَآءِ وَٱلْمُنكَرِ ﴾

سورة العنكبوت آية ٤٥

(For Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds)

(Al'Ankabut: 45)

And Allah said clarifying the sagacity of performance Hajj"

﴿ وَأَذِّن فِي ٱلنَّاسِ بِٱلْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَىٰ كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِن كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ ۝ لِّيَشْهَدُوا۟ مَنَٰفِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا۟ ٱسْمَ ٱللَّهِ ﴾ سورة الحج الآيتان ٢٧-٢٨

(And proclaim the Pilgrimage among men; they will come to you on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways (27) That they may witness the benefits (provided) for them, and celebrate the name of Allah) (Al-Hajj: 27-28)

How if we compared these sayings with what was said by those who believe that religion was revealed for humiliating and exploiting them and Allah ordered them to worship him only for worship not religions like a heavy load. They don't find any way to get rid of performing worship.

Origin of Islam: Freedom of research and regarding:

Islam allowed its followers to do researches and observe the religious origins. Moreover it commanded them to keep firmly to the evidence and for bided imitating religious. This freedom promoted completely ideas and made them fruitful.

It is clear that free research leads to opposing ideas and understanding. This clarifies facts through theses moral conflicting which are the backbone of the community and life of nations.

No doubt that the prophet (P.B.U.H) carried out the invitation of His Lord and stopping the revelation until the Muslims started keeping themselves doing according to this origin. They kept themselves even to all branches of worship and

treatment systems. That is why different opinions appeared, but it Quranic text and the prophetic traditions. So they used to consult each others in what they differ without quarreling or fighting his opinion they would follow him without any conflicting.

This freedom created inclinations which enriched idea and thoughts which promoted the nation, pushing away an animated thinking like being been to purify traditions aiming at knowing what in authentic and what is fabricated. Also, reviewing "Tafsser" interpretation of the Qur'an collecting all contradictive opinions putting them on the correct way of interpretation. Not more than one hundred years passed will we noticed tens of actions in the Islamic Law and its branches. These four were among them that were existed because of their multi followers and the spread of their leaders all over the sites of the world.

If Muslims stopped going on with researches up these limits and were satisfied with what those nalite four introduces, we would say that this was not because of the short sighted of Muslims. They are unable to catch up with those who passed them in science and knowledge.

They left the result of their inadequacy and insufficiency and they will continue feeling their weakness till they promote themselves.

What proves that stopping at this limit was remissness is that those four did not incumbent people to keep their degree. They did not announce that they had reached the top of thinking that people need at any time and place. They confessed that what they came with is the most why could do. Their followers not to implement what they have said except after going through their evidences to do fatwa using my words "when the imam used to do Fatwa he used to say "this is according Abu Hanifa's opinion and this is the best of all what I am able to get, if anyone gets better than this he will be the rightist"

Imam Malik Bin Anas, if he finds out a decree he says to his companions: "Revise it, it is a religion and every body his words can be accepted and replied except the owner of this sacred grave" pointing at the grave of the prophet (P.B.U.H). Imam Al-Shafi said to Al-Rabi:" O Abu Ishaq! Don't imitate all what I say but review it for yourself, it is a religion...

Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal said "look efficiently at your religion imitating anyone except the impeccable is forbidden and causes blind sight." Theses are sayings of the four Imams themselves. They forbid the one who don't know their evidences to imitate them.

Muslims because so inefficient up to the extent they might blame anyone who fitches the evidences of the assiduous ones. They pretended that it is satisfactory for anyone of them to understand some of their sayings or their students' sayings: Look at this freedom that Islam created and look attentively at religious passed Islam, their leaders used to fire anyone even dares to commit different understanding against their own. Compare the leader of ours who forbeded anyone to follow their speeches without review with those who interdicted their followers to think about what they say.

People should revise what they are commanded not pretending that those commands are equal to God's commands to be criticized.

These are the basics "origin' that Islam is specialized with by these origins Islam challenges other decrees that speeded by simultaneously with Islam and came over them all and settled in the hearts of its people and still in the bottom of their hearts.

All the teachings of Islam that settled in the bottom of the hearts are branches of these origins as respecting foreigners, Sharing kindness to families, maintaining the rights of weak... so,

Why did Muslims are degraded while these origins are within them?

The origin that we spoke about are enough to establish the noblest town all over the world and associate the noblest society.

These origins the social and the universal sciences are trying hard to cultivate them in souls. They considered themselves the best of all philosophy among the progressive sciences. Why did Muslims degrade themselves while these are the origins of their religion? What was the cause of that made them tumbled down in the vanished darkness and became hopeless to get the one who can safe them? The answer is not, so difficult.

They declined leaving these origins behind. They avoided being on their way, they gave them their backs. They hated them completely; moreover they did their best to do the opposite. These are the details,'

We have said that the origins of Islam are the link between man and his creator; Did Muslims keep themselves to this origin? The answer is no: They took the graves of their righteous leaders as Kiblah "prayer nich" to pray towards them. They built domes and closets over them raising them beyond the legmate average.

The put turbans over them and put on right lamps inside. It is clear in Sunnah text that it is forbidden to combine graves and Mosques to put on night lamps on them so as public people not to the misled and worshipped them and considered them as intercessors between God and His slaves.

You don't see any of the mob people raising his hands for sublimation but taking one of those righteous people as intercessor for God to favor him. Yes, Muslims did not reach this limit of those who passed them in such an aspect put they declined their first origin. This is against their pure spirits. What increased their declination was that's theses parties they

set around these graves naming them "Mulid". They circle shouting calling God in loud voices and not understandable words in clapping and twisting. After finishing they walk around roads carrying flags and drums going round sheets of the town. If the prophet (P.B.U.H) or anyone of his companies watched such behaviors he would punish the doers severely giving him a penalty punishment, the punishment of those who play of religion.

By such declination their hearts also declined and became away from wisdom of the noble origins. They don't benefit from their effects. According to these misbehaviors Muslims appeared like barbarian nations who were put to the right path by the coming of Islam.

The origin of Islam "Public equality"

Muslims gave it their backs also. They divided people into two groups or we can say they grouped the people into two groups or parties: One of them they called the men of religion "religious people" the second, they called the people of the world. They kept the first one away from being worldly, their work is only to serve in mosques and teaching what is Islam.

The origin of Islam about establishing the principles of consultation in government:

The nation also declined leaving it since long time. That is to say, since the period of Mu'awiyah bin Abi sufyan. Who opposed the fourth caliph and did not care about the enmity of the wise people who decided to give Ali the caliphate. He used force to carry out his interest. He forced people to obey him. He brought his son Yazid to the authority. He got the acknowledgement as a sovereign till the matter settled for him. As a result of that internal riots arose. Al Hussein bin Ali opposed him in Kufa and Abdullah Bin Zubair in Mecca.

The civilian war fired the last the matter settled to Bani Umayah for some of time. The alligators of Bani Al-Abbas appeared. They intruded upon their opponents killing; blood shedding till the matter was settled for them. By all of theses continuous troubles and unsettlement the Nation last its presence and yielded for the over handed, the conquests. The Abbasins made wrong when they surrounded themselves by devious Turkish people who made the caliphate like a toy in their hands. In difference areas of the kingdom there was a separate state led by a tyrant. The country became a battle field full of fights. Then Maghul broke into and came over the Abbasin caliphate. Then the origin of the principle of consultation disappeared or ended. The power became the master. As a result the public center disabled to defend its situations. The coveted objects did not stop, but increased. Muslims continued to be backwarded till the west inherited the most of their origins. They did not feel but when they were surrounded by the invaders from all angles of the world.

About the origin of Islam that happiness and misery:

In the other world depends on the essential deeds and attributes. This is the key of declination like what passed. The deceptive Muslims who were misled and deceived by going through the books that were written by ignorant authors who thought and believed that the rank in the other world are easy obtained by supplications and uttering some words. They used the fabricated and untrue Hadith to mislead the minds beyond the spiritual truth. These books spreaded among Muslims. They pushed them away from the true religion and described the spiritual world and imaginative as false. They put the ribbons of this spiritual world in the hands of the closers. They said if anyone came close to them he will enter paradise and obtain Nymphs even if he committed lots of bad deeds and had over loaded of sins. The one who lost the way to them will loose the

best of all what is good. The souls of the public declined to these false calls forgetting what Allah glory be to Him Says:"

﴿ لَّيْسَ بِأَمَانِيِّكُمْ وَلَآ أَمَانِيِّ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ ۗ مَن يَعْمَلْ سُوٓءًا يُجْزَ بِهِۦ ﴿١٢٣﴾ ﴾ سورة النساء آية ١٢٣

(Not your desires, nor those of the People of the Book (can prevail): whoever works evil, will be requited accordingly.) (An-Nisaa: 123)

In their opinion and sight the meaning of reward and punishment in the other world were lost. The balance of God's just disturbed and the wisdom of attracting and frightening became illegal.

Also worship and striving will stop and be fruitfulless. The matter will be changed into false desires and hopes. This misleading causes the religion to be lost and his followers will go astray.

The origin of Islam about: The confess of the rights of mind and science.

This origin faced opposition and rejection like other origins. Why not it is the time that mythology stories spread among the people by what the ignorant authors collected of myths and superstitions of the mind degraded and the circle of possibilities widened including all what are impossible.

The minds became ready to listen and accept what is said even if it destroys the origin of legislation at Islamic law. They added more exaggerations when they considered rejecting these myths is alleged and unlawful. They threatened those who dared to tell lies of these myths by not entering paradise and not obtaining the mercy of Allah. Those also will face the worst end. That is way the Muslims became not to believe what the

Muslim preacher calls for using the mind and critical thinking, the thinking of people was degraded and became unable to face the shining truth. The origin of Islam about the combination of Religion and civilization, also Muslims declined as they did before. Wars between Muslim princes in the second century and what follows drove minds away from the bounties of life on the earth and pushed them to look forward to what was prepared for them in the other life. Books that scorn life were enriched. The authored kept themselves on narrating stories about hermits and mystic so the souls of Muslims are humiliated and degraded preferring the life of mysticism although this forced life of mysticism is not considered as value. The Muslim became like a sort of servants among nation. They considered civilization as infatuation of soul. When the civilization of Europe appeared with what it carries of charming and was introduced as a novelty they declared that they are dwellers of the other here after and those are the dwellers of this life. This became the decree of some them up till now. This declaration means disability and desire of rest.

The origin of Islam: - which is a warning to man " that presence of man has ways not to be changed:

This origin turned over in the sight of Muslim into the opposite... As they depended in their lives on hopes and fancies and behaved on the basic of fabricated superstitions and false. They were amazed when looking at the tractable reality and the imagination kept them busy not deliberate the current realities. So they didn't investigate reasons, not seeking ways of safety as if it was settled in their souls that change to what is good happens only by supplications. You see when they are in distress they look up to the sky gazing only. The symbolic looks spread widely among them and their kings depended on sovereignty. They took astrologers and misleaders as guides. They went astray in their lives. When they were invaded by Europeans they

found them. The modern invaders have promoted their ways and became a little pit justice otherwise majority of Muslim nations were abolished like the nations of north and South America

The origin of Islam: - Drawing the attention of man towards the system of nature and attracting him to look at its hidden secrets to benefit from it and to feed his spirit and mind and his social system.

People turned aside to the system of nature and kept their knowledge to the activities of mind to understand the words of ancient people. We hope if they had managed that field and collected the books of their fathers in Physics, math, medicine and astronomy and cared about them, unfortunately they were interest in the sciences of speaking and devoted themselves to them. They became stranger; they didn't achieve what there successors achieve in the universe. No one of them became excellent like those scientists who passed them. Their knowledge about the universe was degraded. None of them became able to search for what keeps him healthy or the nature of their land. Inferiority continued up till the foreign sciences covered them in their foreign languages.

They thought them impiety and opposed them. They considered the physical science as a filthy mustn't be touched or approached by a Muslim who believes in God and the day of resurrection look! May Allah bless you! And review this declination away from the rites of the Qur'an and the origins of Islam and till me, to what extent of the lowest point of weakness Islamic communities reached.

While these nations have cut long distance in these natural science using the power of water and air, cutting long distance in a very short time, we see Muslims are still in a backwarded situation because of continuation of using their talk sciences.

Even they reached the lowest point in such sciences and satisfied with their books that dried their mind, and stopped their thinking activities

The origin of Islam: to confess and acknowledge with the rights of man's man's motions, Kindness and desires. The Muslims also said nonsense when handling them as they did with the other origins. They did not distinguish between the real desires and false ones, and between good emotions and bad ones. Only theses who know the secrets of the psychological sciences but how can they notice this? These sciences are branches of these natural sciences which are changeable up to no limit.

The Islamic Origin: To unify the world in one circle concerning treatments.

This origin also faced the same like the others over. That was either because of

no researches in this field or because of the disability to carry it out. The Muslims minds hardened and stiffened. They lost their right ways to their lovely and benefitable origins. That is why their warrant and authorities became out of their hands. Their public and private affairs became in hands of others.

Either they investigated this matter or not they have to use their natural thinking and original opinion.

Muslims today, if they are not searching for this unity within its frame that keeps item existing they will be led. By force to loose their dignity and spoil in the body of the nations surrounding them.

The Islamic Origin which is the confess of rules of promotion:

This origin also faced severs declination by Muslims.

Muslims as they are today are interest in the past. Their

leaders dream to return the era of Bani Al Abbas or similar to it. That era when the Islamic civilization reached the tops by their great speed on the way to promotion. Now Muslims are doing the opposite of these origins that to promotion their states. Their ancestors during the Abbassy era advanced by leading the natural path. They translated the natural books that were written in Greek Persian and Indian languages and kept themselves studying and understanding them till they became proficient. They did not satisfy with that only but they departed to the towns of theses nations and learnt their languages examined their communities, traced their traits and knew their plants and animals. They transferred all what is good to their countries.

But today we hope if we could go back to one of our proceeded times not leading the same way as if this could occur only by dreaming or hopes.

The Islamic origin that Religion was legislated for the interest and benefit of man not for degrading and exploiting him.

Nobody is researching or investigating into this religion. You could see thousands of teachers and preachers teaching religion in mosques and institutions only satisfied with, how to performance ablution, prayer, hajj and Alms giving. They don't approach the wisdom behind these worships till the performance of devotions for the sake of devotions settled in the souls of the public and upper-classes every one of those satisfied with prostration and bowing down in prayer doing this as quickly as possible . These are only movements with no benefit behind them. If he fasted he will stop eating and drinking all day committing all other sins as if he is doing unpaid-work, when the caller for prayer says "Hay AlA al salah" come for prayer he will set at his table eating as much as he can till he fills his stomach to the extent he can't move. He spends the night from on club to another till the time of 'suhur" he starts eating as much as he can. He spends Ramadan to its end like that. But if the well educated

ones taught the people the wisdom behind these devotions that they are performed to gain the spiritual perfection. If they continued doing theses researches Muslims will be luckier than today.

The Islamic origin which is setting researches free, looking into religion for reviewing: This origin also faced opposite and contradictions as what passed above Muslims are doing the opposite. It was settled in souls that there is no possible better than what passed. It is enough for the nation to be supported by its ancestors in wholly and practicality not only in devotional matters but also in all cases of legitimacy specially treatments.

This narrowness was not enough but they decided that it is not allowed for man to mix between doctrine schools by imitating two Imams in one time. If a man followed Abu Hanifa's doctrine he must leave the other schools. On the contrary the European nations where there are legislative groups' working day and night to standardizing the laws, renewing what became so old and not efficient for today, we see Muslims took and shape with no desire to change. If there is in religion.

What forbids them fro reviewing and renewing what is old they will excused but their religion commands them to review not to be stiff their Imams repudiated from those who follow their sayings without criticizing. It is not clear for Muslims today that events renew and systems deteriorate and become rag like cloths and laws develop to match with the benefit of nation???

This stiffness of Muslims towards their tolerant Islamic law pushed them to use the European laws in some cases of treatments. They limited Shari' in the matters of marriage and divorce and inheritance. It a false division. I wish the Muslims has judged by Shari' in such partial matters and cases.

How can Muslims come back to Islam?"

You have seen that the origins of Islam care the lignified social and well known origins. I don't believe that civilization or science whatever perfection they reached can reach the elevation of these origins or get more advancement targets. There is no mean of imaginary or immaterial promotion without a spring receive from these origins its existence. This is a discussionless matter; even the greatest enemy of Islam can't say the opposite using slight of evidence. The declination of Muslims away from their religion was a result of many factors affected them for long time. The traits of these factors settled in their minds and affected their manners and traditions. That is why they became Muslims by name not by the meaning.

We are not in need to know theses factors because this will take us out of the limit of the size of this topic. These factors need volumes to cover them. Because of the situation of Muslims nowadays we do this research to get them back to their origins.

This may be considered as a simple research cab be ended by simple words but in fact it is the most dangerous and simulated research for those who deviated from the truth.

Muslims are surrounded by a force greater than the power of the previous colonization. The financial and political domination is the magic power of the western civilization and its athletic teachings.

The time the east contacted the west the first was in complete darkness of ignorance, in loss of deeds and down fall of his civilization. The second was in the best of his outside appearances and complete and perfect means such as: Wide range of science, deep knowledge of philosophy, deeds seem to the magic, civilization that attracts eyes and power with great number and material, no huge fortresses can stand against them.

The east astonished from this sudden and has nothing to do except to declare and acknowledge his weakness compared with the west,if yield submissively. He result was the blind imitation. But in what thing? The imitation was in the outside appearance of civilization and the decorations of the industrial misrepresentations. The public in this case followed the upper. Class ones. The people became no different between the well educated and the ignorant you can see the daughter of the Sheikh who puts on the turban putting on a hat and going to school like an European girls. This imitation is nice if it includes all means of supporting social life, but we restricted it to the outside appearance of civilization leaving what is beneficiate. That is why local triad was unused. The nation adapted on the spirit of luxury living and extravagance. The all linked to the false appearance and satisfied with falsehood. All was directed to this sight pushed by a powerful current stronger than their interest.

The European science approached carrying doubts on decrees and suspect in religion. The minds accepted much of that. This became worse and worse and we became have no basic in life to depend on when standing. We neither kept our moral origins nor our religion, customs and language. This became our description and character. You can see this description prescribed on all our life appearance. If any one of us wants to look after his son he feels no shyness in sending him to any school establish in his town. He will send him to government school or to different inclination and principles foreign school. He do not measure he difference effects on our origins. He can see that the Greece never send his son –the piece of his heart to any school but to the schools established by his natives. The same is the French, the Italian and the English and soon from all nations. It seems that the Muslim has no principle to keep or origin he wants goes back to it.

Let's measure this to all his trials in life. You don't critical

any of them but you notice no principle stamped on him. You can say if you like to become

Principleness.

Did you see then why was Islam promoted by its principles and men? How weak Muslims are nowadays. Defects are not within origin but in not applying the origin. Muslims left behind their principles as a result their principles left them behind. So their state became as it is and "there is neither might nor power but in God". We hope could go back with a hard endeavor to the true principles of Islam so as they go back to their glorious possession under the sun.

Here we expose to some sayings of whom Allah lighten their hearts with the light of the faith from non-Muslims whom saw the truth and recognized it with open hearts.

1- Verily, the Holy Qur'an radiates in the souls the easiest creeds, less vagueness, and out of the measure of rites more emancipation of the Idolatry (paganism). (Wale Durant: the Author of the book – The story of the civilization)

2- Once upon a time I read some verses of the holy Qur'an, as soon as I finished reciting, till I felt to cry so, I liberate myself of hateful fanaticism and converted to Islam. (Al-Lord Stanly Oldry)

3- During my traveling in the universe between the fields and the space I saw a humble man standing in front of Allah to perform the prayer in fear and submission, so I wish to pray like him…

I thought that gifts from Allah to the earth to affect the souls of the Righteous people.

(Zaki Arysy: The Lawyer- the Dean of the Jew's Cult in Egypt before adopting Islam)

4- When I watch the Mosque for the first time, I felt that something in my deep feelings like the magic deeds, so I felt that I'm a Muslim before declaring it, now I'm feeling as I was born again. I left my old deep sentimental... I believe in the oneness of Allah. There is no god but He.

(Marshall Mickal Anglo – the British actress)

5- When I look at the groups of Muslims while they perform prayer in congregation, the Tranquility calmness, and the sweet faith covered their faces to show the greatness of this Religion... I wished to be one of them whom prostrate and bow themselves down to their Lord.

(The philosopher – August Quant)

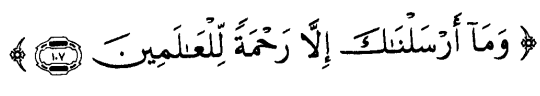
6- One night I woke up to pray, I lasted for a long period. In the morning I left my job as a director in Hollywood with its seduction. I gave my soul and my body to the Lord of Muhammad (P.B.U.H)... Today I'm one of the Muslims.

(Wax Ingram- the American Director for the cinema)

7- The most important action in my life that I studied the auto Biography of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and realized the greatness and the eternity in it.

(Lamartan- the important French poet)

8- There is no description of the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) better than of the statement of Allah by Saying:-



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(We sent you not, but as a mercy for all creatures.)

(Anbiyaa: 107)

and the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is a real mercy and I pray him eagerly. (Jan Lick – the Spanish Orientalist)

9- Who any one attained the human greater like Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and who any one attained the perfection like Him (P.B.U.H). He destroyed the false creeds that take mediator between the creator and His creatures. (Lamartan)

10- While I was reading the Holy Qur'an I felt that my soul trembles inside my body. (Ghtaa)

11- In the history of Messages, there is no any Scripture without any deviation in its letters (changes) except the Holy Qur'an that was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). (Michel Harts: An American Writer)

12- I studied the Holy Qur'an and I found all the answers concerning all the problems in the life. (Mike Tyson: The international Boxer)

13- When Adam stood in his feet, he saw words in the air twinkling like the sun theses words were "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet. The first man accepted these words, in a father behavior wiping his eyes and said: may Allah bliss that day you will come to the world.

(Barnaba Bible- chapter 39)

14- I said to you the truth, It is better for you to depart because if I didn't depart, you would not see the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) the (praiseworthy) but if I do I shall sent him to you, he'll learn you the truth because he doesn't utter from himself. (Yuhanna Bible- chapter 16)

15- Islam came to me as a light to invade my dark heart... but... to inhabitant to last in my heart forever. (Loped Fays: From a Jew's family, he knew after his adopting Islam with: Mohammad Asad)

16- There is no place on the surface of the Earth that Islam spread in it. It is the only the Religion that all people like to adopt it strongly than any other Religion. (Hanoto: the former foreigner affairs of France)

17- When I was at school, I realized that there is a difference between the Religion lessons and the other sciences lessons like math... We learned in the Religion lesson 3= 1 (Three equal one) but it is untrue in the mathematics lessons, I found that the one is one in Islam. (Cat Steven- Yusuf Islam)

18- If I was born a Christian this does not mean to be a Christian all my life, I was not know how to believe in the principle that says :- If you don't eat from the body of the Christ and drink his blood you won't save of the torment Hell . (The Engineer Al-lord Hedley)

19- The Jews don't accept with the Christ and the Christians don't accept Muhammad (P.B.U.H) but the Muslims accept both Moses and Jesus the Christ. (The International Boxer: Mick Tyson)

20- The new born (baby) is born as a Muslim instinctly but the Christians think that baby that was born with full of sins. Since hundred years, the Saints were put the children after birth in a special water to purify them from great sin but if they died before putting them in the water, they didn't bury them ... but they threw them in rubbish because they full of sins.

(Dr Anerbredg Norwegian Orientalist)

21- Many times, there are some words which appeare in the horizon of history that attract the sights like the lightening which remove the darkness to light the future. What can I do if the Holy Qur'an mightier than France.

(Lacost: The Ministry of French colonies 1962)

22- If the Holy Qur'an still among the Muslims hands Europe can't control the East. (Kladaston: The Former Prime Minister of Britain)

23- What I fear and scare me that a new character like Muhammad appears in the Arab World. (Bin Goryon)

24- We discovered that the real danger on us lies in Islam by its ability to spread, its submission and its marvelous activity. (Lawrence Brown)

25- Who knows the Western countries may be threatened by the Muslims who will descend from the sky to conquer the world again in proper time. (Albert Mashador)

26- The real danger that threatens our civilization is what the Muslims can affect when they change the system of the world. (Salazar)

27- The real danger that threats us directly and strongly is the danger of Islam, the Muslims are independent world differ from Western World, they have their own spiritual inheritance, and also, they have historical civilization. They could establish the rules of a new world, also, they have the ability to establish a new world without needing to loose their characteristics and spiritual civilization into the Western civilization, if they could catch the reasons of industrial, production in a vast scale, they would carry out their precious civilization and spread over the earth to remove the basis of Western civilization and throw their message to the historical Museums.

(A representative of The Ministry of affairs in France 1952)

28- We terribly scare when we see Islam spreads smoothly in the African continent. Moro Barger)

29- We were as a protectors to defend Europe against the Islamic invasion which carry out by the Algerians and their Muslims brothers across the Mediterranean sea, and this to restore AL- Andalus that They had lost it; and to enter with us the Center of France after achieving victory in the battle of Boittee and to crash the weak Europe and to complete what they were intended to achieve El-Amayans dream by changing the Mediterranean into Islamic lake, so we were fighting in Algeria.

(From a lecture under the title of: Why do we try to remain in Algeria?)

30- Lewis the ninth the king of France who was captured in Dar bin Luqman in Mansoura said in a[preserved document in Dar of national documents in Paris, it is not possible to achieve victory on the Muslims through war but by following these steps:

1- Disunite among the Muslim leaders.

2- Prevent any pious ruler to judge the Arab and Islamic countries.

3- Spoil the system of judgment in the Islamic countries by spreading the bribes, corruption and the seduction of women which leads to the separation between bottom and the top.

4- On being impossible to constitute a complete and faithful army has the ability to scarify in sake of his principle and target.

5- On being to prevent any Arab unity in the region.

6- Encourage on establishing a foreign country in the Arab region to extend with the westerns, we must demolish the Arabic Qur'an also the Arabic tongue to overcome them.

(The French Ruler in Algeria after hundred year of conquer it)

31-Muslim can spread their civilization in the world as fast as they did in the past times provided that following the morals that they followed, because this empty world can not stand firmly in front of the spirit of their civilization.

(Marmadok Baktoul)

32-If every human self comprises a consideration, and if every existent comprises an instructive example, what is the best thing to realize the deep motive effect that we feel when we see the life of a man has a message that a great Team (group) of people believe in his message all the mankind.

(Emeil Drmanghm: A French Orientalist)

33- Verily, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was the best example of the human life by his autobiography, true believe, and his deep national creed, also he is a complete instance for honesty and straightness. His scarification in sake of spreading his Godly message is evidence on His noble intention, the greatness of His character and the Holiness of His Prophethood.

(Ahmad Sosa)

34- Have you ever seen... that is a liar man can establish a wonderful religion... he can not build a house made from bricks, it is not worthy to keep his house on the basis 12 centuries and

Inhabitant with 200 millions one. It must be collapsed and became nothing.

(Thomas Karlayel)

35- Verily the religious nature of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) admires every accurate researcher according to the true sincerity; Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was a religious reformer with firmly creed.

(Mountah)

36- The Arabs grants the world a new culture to the world, also, they established a creed that lasted till that present time one of the greatest vital strength in the world, and the man who flames this Arabic firebrand is the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H).

(Herbert Gorge)

37- After studying the various religions in the world I realized that Islam is the only religion that affects in those whom believe and disbelieve as equal. The most virtue of Islam that the ability to capture the hearts of humans spontaneously. As a result you will find magnetic power can attract the people who have open minded of non-Muslim.

(Mary Oliver)

38- Islam in his cradle, was like the sun shine of the freedom, shining and Blazing, Islam is a religion which full of holy free intends and what was happened Islamic world afterwards from the infertility and weakness. Islam and its true qualities are justice veil about the essence.

(Lotharb Stoddard)

39-The Islamic principles that attracted my attention and poled my interest... when I converted to Islam that the Christianity left some aspects unclear and full of ambiguity specially in the conventional image that full of suspicious, but Islam is very clear in everything without ambiguity.

(Frankstok)

40- According to uttering the truth, I must declare that we are the Christians in completely ignore Islam as a religion and civilization.

(Nasry sahlab)

41- The western man will never understand the reality of Islam except unless he feels that it's a style of life that forms the life of Muslim in and out not only ideas or creed as he discussed by his thought.

(Wilfred Kantuail Smith, Prof of Islamic studies in Montréal University)

42- Thank to Allah who defeated idolatry in different shapes and liberated the understanding of the universe, the rites of religion and customs of social life from all horrors and disfigurements that degraded them. He liberated the human minds from inclination; Human beings came to know their up-graded standard.

(Lorafishia flashily – contemporary Italian Researcher)

43- Islam achieves full harmony of life in this world. It is an easy religion: it has no crookings or complications. It is direct free from all speculations that have no way to believe in them.

(Britannic officer Fulious)

44- It is very shameful for any religious person nowadays to listen to those who thought that the religion of Islam is false and Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is a deceiver and a forged man. We have to fight against such sayings which are shameful and silly. The message that this Prophet (P.B.U.H) delivered is still the illuminative light since twelve centuries, embraced by around two hundred millions of creatures created by Allah the one who created us. Could anyone of you think that this message which all of these countless millions believed in it and died on it, is false and forgery? If forgery and deception are good demanded by people and are acceptable up to this limit, the people not more than mad and silly and life also not more than silly and useless...

(The well-known English writer Thomas Kalaill)

45-Islam is a vital religion. It is ever living inside the hearts of its acceptants. It is the religion that the more the time passes the more its vitality increases, its affairs strengths, its authorities spread out and its call prevails without being liked, it couldn't stay alive, keeping its strength effect and love of its believers.

(Noble English: Aladi Ivline kobold)

46-I made long researches at the secret of Existence according to my studies of philosophy and psychology but I came to know that Islam is the nearest religion to heavens and to human's spirit. I became very sure that it is the religion that satisfies me and accepted to be believed in.

(The American Philosopher "Arthur Keen)

47- I can't record how happy I am with this religion that started and to expanded before my sight. I felt that it is the religion I am waiting for. My declaration of embracing Islam was very clear interpretation to the voice of my conscience. Is there any marvelous evidence more than the Islamic creed.

(Fatima si Lamer "A German lady not satisfied with Christianity)

48-One of the marvels of Islam was that it was based on the ability of mind. It didn't ask its followers to neglect this vital talent from Allah. It opposes the other religions that obligate their followers accept specific principles without investigation or thinking.

(Eng- prof- Harun Mustafa liun)

49- Islam differs from Christianity that it doesn't adopt itself to the systems of the church, priests and immolations. Islam connected itself with pure unity that needs no interference between man and His Creator.

(Koler Yongh "Prof of foreign relations in Bernstein University)

50-One of the main factors that attracted people strongly towards this creed was that supreme example which aims at keeping all the believers as brothers in Islam.

(Eng Historian Thomas Arnold)

51- Under the shade of Islam woman restored her freedom and gained a supreme place. Islam considers women as real sisters to men. Every one of them perfects the other one.

(Mona Abdullah Maclosky " A German lady worked as a consul in Bangladesh)

52- There is no another religion except Islam has the ability to solve people's problems in the modern world. This is the advantage of Islam only.

(Indian political and Journalist: Kofhi lal Gaba)

53- Acknowledge of a western woman:

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious and Most Merciful: This is an easy published in the family magazine (No 71) about an acknowledge of a Western woman who became Muslim recently. I'm interested in showing it to the reachers specially those who are Muslims women to know what favors they have: The magazine mentioned: "It is not new to say that the campaign against Islam trying to spoil its facts, became more severe in the west. It reached the limit that Muslims are considered in the sight of western people as a pagan whom are worshipping the moon! But what causes pleasure is that what Islam the most prevailed religion in the world. That may be the reason that makes the west feels envy against Islam. Most of the western people found their lost aim after they had suffered searching for guidance in such a material and disfigured communities.

One of the most numerous false calls that the western press repeats about Islam, is that: Islam oppresses and subdues the woman.

Although this false call have been responded for more than hundred years. The reply this time comes from a western woman who became Muslim recently. Let's read the details of her vision:

She said: "During the time when Islam was facing severe enmity by the western Media specially when discussing the affairs of the woman, it was amazing to know that Islam is the greatest religion prevailing in the world. Also the most amusable matter was that the majority of those who declined away from their religions to convert Islam were women.

The position of woman in the society is not a new case. In the opinion of the most people that the term "Muslim woman" is connected with the figure of the miserable mothers who have nothing to do but the housework. At the same time they are victims of oppression in such a life that is controlled by principles. Those women will never have rest except by imitating the Western woman ... and so forth.

Some of them go far identifying that veil is an obstacle on the face of the woman, it covers her mind and the ones who embrace Islam of among them must be, either their minds were washed or they are stupid or betrayal to their race.

I refuse these accusations and I give this question: Why do the great most of women who were born and grown up in the so called civilized societies in Europe and America are insisting to reject their freedom and independence for embrace the religion that denies their rights? As a Christian who converted Islam. I can expose my personal experience why refusing freedom that women in such societies claimed enjoying it and preferring it to this

only religion that liberated women, compared with their similar in other religions.

Before being a Muslim I was having a strong female tendency.

I felt that where the woman is estimated, there must be a sort of deceiving and equivocation. This made me disable to identify the position of such a woman on the social map. The problem was still. Many new cases concerning the woman provoked but without a satisfactory solution for the previous ones. The same like women who had the same background like me, I was defaming this religion because I believed that it took the side of man against the woman and it was based on differention between the two races and it is the religion that oppresses the woman and favors man with plentiful of merits. All of these were the belief of a woman who didn't know anything about Islam. A woman's ignorance blinded her sight and accepted that false identification about Islam.

Despite criticizing Islam, I was not from inside satisfied with my position as a woman living in this society. It was appeared to me that the society had deceived the woman pretending that it had offered her freedom and women accept that without discussion. How great contradiction was that between what the women knew the theoretically and what happens practically.

The more any meditation increases the more I feel vacuity. I gradually started to reach a stage of being unsatisfied with my position as a woman in the society which reflected being unsatisfied with the society as a whole.

It appeared to me that everything was retreating back. It looked that I had lost a vital thing in my life and nothing

could fill that vacuity in my life.

As a Christian this didn't achieve anything for me. I began asking an inquiring about the meaning of mentioning Allah once a week on Sunday! Like many Christians rather than me, I began to come to myself and noticed the illusion and hypocrisy of the church. I began not to be satisfied with the holy trinity and the divinity of Jesus (May peace be upon him). At the end I began to give attentive consideration to Islam. First of all I was attentive to the cases that concerned woman. These cases provoked my astonishment.

How much I have read and learned about myself as a woman – I came

to know where the real oppression of woman settles in all other systems and life not Islam which favored the woman all her rights in all aspects of life. It fixed identifications that clarified her role in the society similar to what were given to man. Allah, the Almighty said:

﴿ وَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِنَ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ مِن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ ٱلْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا ﴿١٢٤﴾ ﴾

سورة النساء آية ١٢٤

(If any do deeds of righteousness, - be they male or female - and have faith, they will enter Heaven, and not the least injustice will be done to them.) (An-Nisaa: 124)

These are important confessions of scientists and historians with their different inclinations who knew the right path so they fallowed it.

54- Muhammad (P.B.U.H) devoted his life to achieve the goals of his message in two fields "The unity of the religious thought and the law and system of judgment".

He (P.B.U.H) achieved this goal by the comprehensive system that combined the onenss and the executive authority together. By the honor of this system Islam owned gigantic defensive power not only guaranteed. The needs of the Arabs and changed them from being ignorant to being a civilized nation but also Islam proceeded out of the boundaries of the Arabs Peninsula and invaded the whole world from the Atlantic Ocean to the coast of Al sahib Al urasi.

The biography of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) attracted his followers and towered up their personalities. They believed in him to the extent that they accepted what was revealed to him and also accepted his deeds as they were recorded by Sunnah which became a source of legislation. They not only put the life of Muslim groups in good order but organized also the relation between the conquer Muslims and non-Muslim who were in the past more than them in number.

(Arnold Toynbee)

55- The Arabic language is the language of the Qur'an. It was the foundation that the new nation based on. This nation was evolved tribes they never gathered together under one flag or one opinion.

The mission of prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) united them .So prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) added one new fourth characteristic to the three basic terms of the civilization: Religion, State and culture. This fourth term was "establishing a nation with a supreme language.

Setting up brotherhood in Islam to replace the ignorant partisansrship that was based on blood relation to establish social building, was indeed a new brave action done by the prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) some contemporary writers tried to discover the excellent deeds that were achieved by Muhammad (P.B.U.H) or tried to deal with his marital life by doing psychological analyses. They added nothing except these false judgments based on false knowledge.

The qualities of prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) were described perfectly in the Holy Qur'an better than any other sources. The battles that he led, and judgments that he confirmed and work that he did, left no doubt in such strong personality , steadfast faith and high faithfulness and , so forth of qualities, that created historical leaders . Though he was brought up poor and orphan he was very kind and helpful to the needy.

If we focused on Muhammad (P.B.U.H) through what he had achieved of work we could notice that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) the man, the teacher, the preacher, the man of state and the man who devoted his life for the sake of Islam, was one of the greatest men throughout history. He spreaded Islam as a religion, and establish a state called caliphat – He put the foundations of the Islamic Arabian civilization.

He set up nation called the Arab nation and stills this active and vital power insid the hearts of millions of human- beings. (Philippe Hatt)

56- Sometimes Muhammad (P.B.U.H) used to meet Jibril

(May peace be upon him) and receive verses that carries all wisdom. He preached his people to leave

committing sins and being astray and to believe in One God who has perfect power. He cursed idols that were worshipped.

That was why the nobles of Arabs rancoured him keeping wickedness against him in their hearts for fear of loosing their leadership that was based on idols worshipping which were destroyed by Muhammad (P.B.U.H) .

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) utilized each second to spread his message He didn't leave nobles of the Arabs insult him but he challenged them so they were full of hatred against him . His call was changed from a peaceful one to a struggle call. He refused the sayings: "if one beats you on your lift cheek give him the right one ". He followed his way without fear; in one hand there is a message of guidance and in the second one his sword to fight those who fight him. At the beginning of his call few individuals believed him. They as will as he was oppressed. They were the early fruit and first light that the message of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) started with.

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and him followers were secured and confident in Medina more than in Mecca. Medina was the city of the public who followed the prophet (P.B.U.H) not the city of upper class people who seek leadership. Leadership. The public always follow the right word especially if the right word will free them from being slaves to being the upper class ones.

Muhammad Bin Abdullah (P.B.U.H) was excited .he refused to follow the dwellers of the desert their idols worshipping and their bad habits and customs which were well-known in their barbarian society. He fought severely the ignorance of the unbeliever and their masters and destroyed their gods.

He was detested by his people and tried to kill him, so he immigrated night with some of his followers. He didn't give up his struggling for the sake of prevailing his message. He created from the ignorance of the desert a religious and social creed which united millions of people all over theworld. (Gorge Hanna)

57- Muhammad (P.B.U.H) evangelized his doctrine actively from the first time; He (P.B.U.H) didn't have rest, never feel less perseverance but by his constant belief that this doctrine is good for the special group.

Doing all of these good deeds he denied himself.

In fact Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was the first real good doer among the Arab people from the historic point of view. During this era we could see the prophet (P.B.U.H) utilizing his intelligence and his for sighted in resisting his antagonists those who started opposing his aims out and inside his country.

(Y. Gldziher)

58- Muhammad (P.B.U.H) united the Arabs before his death, and established one united nation. They believed in one God and submitted to one religion, under the leadership of one leader. That was his great sign. No doubt that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) got good results in the Arab land which never happened there by any of the other religions that appeared before Islam like Christianity and Judaism that is why its favor covered all Arabs. If men were measured by their momentous work, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) would be the greatest of all of those who were known throughout history. The western scientists treated Muhammad (P.B.U.H) with justice although their religious

partisanship blinded their sights of plenty historians, so they didn't confess of his favor towards them. (Ghostaf lobon)

59- Muhammad (P.B.U.H) became able to offer the Arabian People high and honorable example the time they were in less of such examples. The greatness of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was very clear to all his people, so they didn't hesitate to scarify themselves for the sake of this supreme example.

No doubt that it was so great of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) that he could comprehence all the military civilized and religious authorities to be in one hand the time the Arabian Peninsula was divided into separate parties. As a result of this unity, the Arabs in one century became able to conquer vast areas the time before they were barbarian tribes fighting against each others before the appearance of Muhammad (P.B.U.H)

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was one of the greatest men who were characterized with generous nature, noble manner, limitless shyness and strong feelings. He (P.B.U.H) was having endless excellence and gentleness and sensitiveness and satisfactory nature. He was habituated on senses.

Some of the contemporary writers became about to know that defame, slander and calling bad names are not evidences or proofs so they yielded and mentioned many of the honorable characteristics and noble qualities of the Prophet (P.B.U.H). Hundred millions of people didn't become Muslims but by the blessings of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) .He taught them how to prostrate and how bow down for Allah .He (P. B.U. H) left for them a constitution if they kept it they will never go astray. That is Qur'an which

contains what is good for their life and hereafter. When Muhammad (P.B.U.H) honored this universe by his presence which is the greatest means for promoting the human races and developing them to be civilized. He (P.B.U.H) completed the needs of human beings based on legislative and lawful means. He derived the creature to the outmost of happiness very quickly. The one who focuses on the situation of people before the arrival of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and how they were in loss and focuses on their situation after his arrival and their state of promotion and civilization he will notice great difference between the two states. It is like the difference between star and dust.

The light of Medina spreaded in short time to cover all the corners of the earth. His companions gained high dignity and civilization this puzzled the broad minded scientists. This was because his orders and forbiddings suited the mind and corresponded with wisdom. (Abdullah lowliam)

60- Luka:

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was not similar to any other person in manners and qualities. He combined all the qualities of all messengers. It was his right for Allah to make him the ideal example and to honor him as a man.

There is no divinity or suspicion of divinity in the meaning of Islamic prophecy.

The peoples on earth accustomed to make a god of their kings, heroes and ancestors. The messengers were also exposed to such connection between them and divinity at any reason.

How the people will be if they give themselves the right to believe that the prophet or the messenger is not a

human – being and have the qualities of divinity. That is why Qur'an in many chapters confirmed frequently this cautioning. These are some examples but not all: Allah said in chapter Al-Kahf verse 110

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّمَآ أَنَا۠ بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰٓ إِلَيَّ ﴿١١٠﴾ ﴾

سورة الكهف آية ١١٠

(Say: "I am but a man like yourselves, (but) the inspiration has come to me) (Al-Kahf: 110) The word "like yourselves" Allah means definite equality as raising prophets or a messenger above the standarded of humans is impossible by all means.

We can find what is clearer than in the chapter of Ash-Shura : verse 48 , Allah instructs His prophet (P.B.U.H) in this coming verse about the reality of His mission and limits that Allah charged him to carry them out not to pass them and people mustn't raise him above these limits . Allah says:

﴿ فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا۟ فَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَـٰكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا ۖ إِنْ عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا ٱلْبَلَـٰغُ ﴿٤٨﴾ ﴾ سورة الشورى آية ٤٨

(If then they turn away, we have not sent you as a guard over them. your duty is but to convey (the Message). (Ash-Shura: 48)

He is only a single man has the tongue of heavens, above him is Allah and nothing but Allah, under Him are all the believers .The slaves of Allah. This man "The prophet "(P.B.U.H) refuses to be proud of that. He is away of that as he undertakes to fight the proudness within himself before forbidding it for his followers. If this Prophet

(P.B.U.H) with what he favored his people and the graces of Allah over him became proud of them, no body could contradict him because he is proud of what is ready seen before them. But the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said: Don't praise in me as the Christians praised in Jews the son of Maryam; I am a salve of Allah, so, say. The salve of Allah and His Messenger. He passed by some of his companions. So they stood up honoring him, he (P.B.U.H) forbided this saying to them: Don't stand up like the non-Arabs each of them magnifies the other.

What remained of pretense for a pretender?

This belief was tested by hardship long of time before gaining victory. This victory was not expected or Simi expected for this caller to God inside the capital of pagans and raffling with arrows. It is also honesty that passed benefits and loftiness that was virtuous away from pleasure of life and forgiveness that is not mixed with proudness or payable authority. His relatives didn't inherit him. He didn't prefer any of his offspring or his clan with any advantage of this world that gives them pleasure or authority. He (P.B.U.H) forbidded for himself what was lawful for others his followers. He cancelled all privileges that were owned to his tribe before Islam. He made the slaves and Abyssinian equal to the kings of Quraish. During the period of ignorance the people have paid for those who were in the authority but when he comes as a prophet he made this equal to land.

No doubt here or suspect and touch this very high and faithful character. It is true: he (P.B.U.H) didn't utter any word from his desire, it an inspiration revealed to him. He didn't go astray and seduced. There is no one says the truth if not the truthful and faithful. Who is the one deserves to defend his character against cunning except

the father of Abul -Qassim (P.B.U.H). The one who changed those who worshiped idols to worship only One God. He (P.B.U.H) pulled them out from being astray to the highness and faith. He didn't benefit for himself or for his relatives any of the ornamented fragments that the seculars are fighting to obtain .Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was having a great power but this power didn't own him. He utilized his tasks not been utilized by his tasks. These are advantages measured for him. They are not weakness in his character. He (P.B.U.H) was full of desires but not the desires that can storm him because he utilized these desires in the standard that favored man when he required what is good and nice. It is the nice and honorable picture that didn't degrade his dignity but double his purity and highness. This was very clear when dealing with his nine wives.(May Allah be pleased with all of them)

61- Masse

Thanks to the religious and political turns of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) that united basically the Arabs. If the Arabs understood themselves and liberated themselves from the darkness of ignorance and confusion this would be totally civilized. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) the inspired legislator and the first motive of unity among all peoples. He was simple and firm.

62- Montet

The Islamic nature of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) astonishes every accurate and honest aim researcher by his faithfulness that characterized his nature. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was a religious reformer with a solid creed. He

wasn't sent till he reached the perfect age and undertook the great call that made him very shining human light in religion. Fighting against bad customs and traditions and polytheism which were prevailed among Arabs by that time, he was similar to one of the Prophets (P.B.U.H) of Bani Israel whom we see that they were very great in the history of their people.

Many of the people ignored Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and denied his rights, that was because he was one of the rare reformers who the people knew His biography accurately.

Muhammad was with generous manners, good companionship decent speech, perfect judgment and trustworthy when speaking. The more well-known of his qualities were the right judgment, frank when speaking, his satisfaction with what he says and does. It is very rare among the reformers the one you know his biography in details like Muhammad (P.B.U.H). He is concedered one of the greatest righteous reformer for humanity because of what he did to reform manners and purifies the society. There is no doubt in his faithfulness and his religious enthusiasm.

63- Nehru

Those kings and rulers who received the messages from the messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H) astonished from that simple man who calls them to obey and follow his call sending these messages to those kings and rulers identifies how he was self-confidence and confident in his message. He created by this confidence and his faith means of power self –esteem and strength for his nation.

He changed them from being bedwins to masters who

conquered about half of the world during their era. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) died after he had changed the separated Arab tribes to be one nation full enthusiasm and energy.

64- Harth

My Choice of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to be on the top of the list that included the person who had great effect on the whole world in different aspects "Fields" caused plenty of readers very astonished. In my opinion Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was the only man in history who succeeded truly in both of the Religious and the worldly sides.

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) established and spreaded one of the glorified religious all over the world. He became one of the greatest political leaders. Nowadays after thirteen centuries had passed after his death (P.B.U.H), his influence was still strong and violent. From the real Islamic point of view Muhammad (P.B.U.H) appears having an impact on the humanity throughout history like Jesus (May peace be upon him) But Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was different than Jesus and the Christ, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was secular and religious leader. In fact if we considered the meditative power behind the Islamic conquests, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) would become the greatest political leader all over generations.

This unique unity between religious and secular impact gives Muhammad (P.B.U.H) the title that he is the greatest personality alone that had an impact throughout human history. This is Islam and those are his defender and this was the prophet (P.B.U.H) who brought this religion. From now we come to know the fault of the Danish newspaper which spreaded pictures defaming

Muhammad (P.B.U.H). Gelandes postern newspaper had committed a great sin when it dared in 30 Dec, 2005 to publish twelve character pictures that photostatted the prophet (P.B.U.H) in different positions.

In one of these pictures they photostatted the Prophet (P.B.U.H) putting on a turban similar to wrapping bomb around his neck. This matter arose wide criticism and protestation by the minority Muslims in Danish demanding a forward accusation from the newspaper which refused saying that what was published was a sort of free expressing. The Magazines' Norwegian on Tuesday 10/1/2006 repeated the same picture.

The story of these pictures belongs to an author of children's, books. His name was "Karre Blutgen". He wanted to decorate a book for children. This book was about the sealed of the Prophets (P.B.U.H) but he didn't find the one who can do such work so, they held a competition of twelve drawers. The newspaper adopted all of their drawers to be published. They photostated the Prophet (P.B.U.H) putting on a turban with a bomb fixed in it.

These pictures transferred to the net web, so the international ageneses spreaded these pictures. The reaction of such crisis explored on a large scale. The ambassadors of eleven Muslim countries, among them were Egypt. Pakistan, Iran, Palestine, Al-Busna and Indonesia protested, they sent messages to the prime Minster of Denmark "Ans Fara Smosin" who declared that he will not interfere as it is an express freedom in his country. One of the Danish newspapers published anarticle with twenty two Danish Diplomats who worked in Muslim countries as ambassadors criticizing the situation of the prime Minster "Ans Fara Smosin". He is famous for

his stressed policy against immigrants and Muslims are among them. He won the public legislative election which took place in Feb 2005. There are about 180 thousand Muslim living in Denmark; they are about 3% of the total number of the inhabitants of Denmark which is 5, 3 millions people. The majority of these immigrants were from the Turkish origin. In the Danish Parliament these are three Muslims. They are: Nasir who is originally from Syria, Hussein Amtrak the Turkish and Kamal Qurashi pakistanian origin.

This is Islam and this is the Prophet of Islam (P.B.U.H) and these are the principles, we exposed them to you so as another should be straight forward and the right may go back to its owners.

﴿ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَذِكْرَىٰ لِمَن كَانَ لَهُۥ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى ٱلسَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٣٧﴾ ﴾ سورة ق آية ٣٧

(Verily in this is a Message for any that has a heart and understanding or who gives ear and is a witness) (Qaf: 37)

The Word of Shiekh M. M. Al-Maraghi Grand Sheikh of Al-Azher

Ever since man appeared on earth he has been anxious to penetrate the universe and discover its laws and secrets. The more he came to know, the more he wondered at its greatness, the weaker he appeared to himself and the less reason he saw for vanity. The Prophet of Islam (P.B.U.H) is very much like the universe. From the very beginning, scholars worked hard to uncover various aspects of his great humanity, to grasp the realization of the Divine attributes in his mind, character and wisdom. Certainly they achieved a fair measure of knowledge. Much however has escaped them; and there still lies ahead a long and indeed infinite road.

Prophethood is a gift which cannot be acquired. In His wisdom Allah grants it to whosoever stands prepared for it and is capable of carrying it. He knows best when and where it will be of most benefit. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was indeed prepared to carry the prophetic message unto all the races of mankind. He (P.B.U.H) was equipped to carry the message of the most perfect religion, to be the final conclusion of prophet-hood, the unique light of guidance for ever.

The infallibility of the prophets in the conveyance of their message and the performance of their Divine trust is a matter on which the scholars have agreed for a long time. Once they are chosen for their task, the prophets' conveyance of their message and their performance of the duties entrusted to them carry no reward. Their work is a necessary consequence of such Divine Revelation.

Like all men, prophets are truly fallible; their distinction lies in that Allah does not leave them in their error. He corrects them and often blames them therefor.

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was commanded to convey a Divine message. But he was not shown how to carry it out nor how to protect the fruits of his work. It was left to him as any rational and sentient being to conduct his affairs as his intelligence and wisdom might dictate. The Revelation which he (P.B.U.H) received was absolutely precise and clear in all that concerns the essence, unity, attributes and worship of Allah. But this was not the case as regards the social institutions of family, village and city, the state in its relations with the said institutions and with other states. There is hence wide scope for research on the Prophet's greatness (P.B.U.H) before his commission as prophet, as there is after his commission had taken place. He (P.B.U.H) became a messenger for his Lord, calling men unto Him, protecting the new faith and guaranteeing the freedom and security of its preachers. He (P.B.U.H) became the ruler of the *Ummah* of Islam, its commander in war and teacher, the judge and organizer of all its internal and foreign affairs. Throughout his career he established justice and reconciled hopelessly disparate and hostile nations and groups. His wisdom, farsightedness, perspicacity, presence of mind and resoluteness are evident in all that he said or did. From him streams of knowledge have sprung and heights of eloquence have arisen to which the great bend their heads in awe and wonder. He (P.B.U.H) departed from this world satisfied with his work, assured of Allah's pleasure and crowned with the gratitude of men.

All these aspects of the Prophet's life (P.B.U.H) deserve special study and research. It is not possible for any one scholar to give them their due; nor to exhaust the meanings inherent in any one of them.

Like that of any other great man, the biography of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and upon his family has been expanded by many an imaginary story, whether innocently or with ulterior motive, deliberately or accidentally. Unlike all other biographies, however, a great portion of it has been included in the Divine Revelation and has thus been preserved forever in the pure Qur'ān. Another fair portion has been safely preserved for us by trustworthy narrators. From these unmistakable sources the biography of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) should be constructed, and on their basis its hidden meanings and complicated problems should be investigated, and its moral established. Its constitutive materials should be subjected to objective and scholarly analysis taking well into consideration the circumstances of time and environment as well as the prevalent beliefs, institutions and customs.

In his book, The Life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) Dr. Haykal gave us the biography of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) which I have had the pleasure of reading in part before printing.

Dr. Haykal is well known to the Arabic reader; his many books obviate the need for an introduction. He studied law and familiarized himself with logic and philosophy. His personal circumstances and career enabled him to study ancient as well as modern culture and to learn a great deal from both. He lectured on and debated, attacked and defended many questions of belief, of social organization and politics. The maturity of his mind is matched by the perfection of his knowledge, and the wide range of his readings. He debates with powerful, convincing arguments and he treats his subject with sound logic and a style all his own. Such preparation stands behind Dr. Haykal's book. In his Preface, Dr. Haykal wrote: "No one should think that research in the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is completed with this work; and I am far from making any such claim. It is closer to the truth for me to say that my work is really only the beginning of scientific research in this field in Arabic. The reader might be

surprised if the strong resemblance of the modern scientific method to the call of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is pointed out. The former demands that the investigator suspend his own beliefs and refrain from prejudgment, to begin his investigation with observation of the data, and then to proceed to experimentation, comparison, classification and finally to conclusion based upon these objective steps. A conclusion thus arrived at is scientific in that it is itself subject to further testing and critical analysis. It is reliable only as long as further scientific investigations do not disprove any of the premises on which it is based. True, the scientific method is the highest achievement of the human race in its effort to liberate man's thought, but it is precisely the method of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and the foundation of his call.

Dr. Haykal's new method is truly Qur'ānic. For he has made reason the judge, and evidence the foundation, of knowledge. He has repudiated conservatism and castigated the conservatives. Agreeing with the Qur'ānic principle "opinion and speculation are no substitute for true knowledge"

﴿ وَمَا لَهُم بِهِۦ مِنْ عِلْمٍ ۖ إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا ٱلظَّنَّ ۖ وَإِنَّ ٱلظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِى مِنَ ٱلْحَقِّ شَيْـًٔا ﴿٢٨﴾ ﴾ سورة النجم آية ٢٨

(But they have no knowledge therein. They follow nothing but conjecture; and conjecture avails nothing against Truth.) (An-Najam: 28)

Dr. Haykal has chastised those who speculate without evidence; who regard the old purely for its age, as sacred. He has imposed the teaching of the truth upon all those who have the capacity to grasp it. "Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had only one irresistible miracle—the Qur'ān. But it is not irrational. How eloquent is the verse of al Busayri:

'Allah did not try us with anything irrational. Thus, we fell under neither doubt nor illusion."

As for Dr. Haykal's claim that this method is a modern method, that is rather questionable. In holding such a claim, Dr. Haykal was reconciling the scholars who are his would-be critics. He himself has acknowledged that this method was the method of the Qur'ān. It is also the method of Muslim scholars of the past. Consider the books of *kalām.* some of them insisted that the first duty of the adult is to know Allah. Others held that the first incumbent duty is to doubt; for there is no knowledge except by means of proof and argument. Although the process of verification is a kind of deduction, the premises of such reasoning must be either self evident, mediately or immediately given to sense, or dependent upon unmistaken experimentation and generalization, following the rules of logic. The slightest error in any premise or in the form of reasoning vitiates the whole proof.

Al Ghazzali, the great teacher, followed exactly the same method. In one of his books, he reported that he had decided to strip his mind bare of all former opinions, to think and to consider, to compare and to contrast, then to rethink all the proofs and all the evidence step by step. After all this reconstruction he reached the conclusion that Islam is true, and thus established a number of views and arguments regarding its nature. He did all this in order to avoid conservatism, to achieve faith with certitude, founded upon truth and argument. It is this kind of faith arising from rational conviction which, all Muslims agree, cannot but be true and bring about salvation.

The same method or deliberate repudiation of all creeds, as a preliminary to investigation and scholarly study, is found in most books of *kalām.* Doubt is indeed an old method; and so is experimentation and generalization. The latter is founded upon observation; and it is not new with us at all. Neglected and forgotten in the orient since it took to conservatism and irrationalism, this old method was taken up by the West, purged clean, and used

with great benefit to science and industry. We are now taking it back from the West thinking that we are adopting a new method of scientific research.

This method then is both old and new. However, to know a method is easy; to apply it is difficult. Men do not differ much in their knowledge of a certain law; but they stand widely apart in their application of it.

To suspend all prejudices, to observe, to experiment, to compare, to deduct and to extrapolate are all easy words. But for man standing under an inheritance of heavy biological and mental burdens, struggling against an oppressive environment of home, village, school, city and country, suffering under the tremendous weight of conditioning by temperament, health, disease and passion—how could it be easy for him to apply the law? That is the question, whether in the past or in the present. That is the reason for the proliferation of views and doctrines. That is the reason for the movement and change of these views from country to country and people to people. With every generation, philosophy and literature don new robes very much like women do. Hardly any theory or principle stands beyond attack, and none is an impregnable fortress. Change has even attacked the theories of knowledge which were venerated during long ages. The theory of relativity brought a whirlwind to accepted scientific principles. But soon, it too was put under attack. Likewise, the theories of nourishment and disease, of their causes and cures, are undergoing continual change. A closer look, therefore, will convince us that there is no security for the productions of our minds unless they are supported by convincing proofs. But what is the proportion of such secure productions of the mind to the long parade of theories which are produced by fancy, projected by sick minds, imposed by politics, or created by scientists who simply love to differ from their peers? This thought may perhaps sober such men of knowledge and science who are too proud of reason and depend on it alone. Such a

thought may yet guide them one day toward the truth, to take shelter under the absolute conviction which it provides, the conviction of true Revelation, of the Holy Qur'ān and the veritable *Sunnah.*

Let us now turn to Dr. Haykal and his book. A number of *mutakallimun* have held that the knowledge which astronomy and the dissection of the hunmn body provide clearly points to the fact that Divine knowledge includes the most minute details of existence. I concur that the discovery and establishment of the laws and secrets of nature will, besides helping the human mind to penetrate what was incomprehensible before, finally support religion. In this vein, Allah the Almighty said in the Holy Qur'an:

﴿ سَنُرِيهِمْ ءَايَٰتِنَا فِى ٱلْءَافَاقِ وَفِىٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ ٱلْحَقُّ ۗ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُۥ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٥٣﴾ ﴾ سورة فصلت آية ٥٣

(Soon will We show them Our Signs in the (furthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that your Lord does witness all things?)

(Fussilat:53)

The discovery of electricity and all the theories and inventions to which it has led has made it possible for us to understand how matter may be transformed into energy and energy into matter. Spiritualism has helped us to understand the transcendent nature of the soul and shed light on the possibility of its separate existence, of its capacity to travel through space and time. It has helped explain many matters on which men differed in ignorance. Dr. Haykal has used this new knowledge in his novel explanation of the story of Muhammad's *Isrā'.*

To list the good points which Dr. Haykal has made in his book would take many long pages. Suffice it then to point to these contributions in a general way. Undoubtedly, the reader will realize the worth of this work and will learn much from Dr. Haykal's well documented arguments, fine logic, and penetrating insight. The reader will realize that Dr. Haykal's whole devotion has been to the truth alone, and that he has approached his task with a heart replete with the light and guidance of the Revelation of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), as well as with great awe for the beauty, majesty, greatness, and moral height of the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H). Dr. Haykal is fully convinced that this religion of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) will surely deliver mankind from doubt, from dark materialism, and will open their eyes to the light of conviction, guide them to the Divine light with which they will come to know Allah's infinite mercy. Dr. Haykal is confident that men will thereby come sooner or later to acknowledge the glory of Allah as Heaven and Earth already do, and praise the Divine might before which all beings become humble. Indeed, he writes: "Indeed, I would even go further. I would assert that such a study may show the road to mankind as a whole to the new civilization to which it is currently groping. If western Christendom is too proud to find the new light in Islam and in its Prophet (P.B.U.H) but willingly accepts it from Indian theosophy and other religions of the Far East then it devolves upon the Orientals themselves, Muslims, Jews or Christians, to undertake this study in all objectivity and fairness in order to reach and establish the truth. Islamic thought rests on a methodology that is scientific and modern as regards all that relates man to nature. In this respect it is perfectly realistic.

But it becomes personalist the moment it leaves nature to consider the relationship of man to the cosmos as a whole and to his creator." Dr. Haykal goes on to say that "the pioneer fighters against this all-embracing paganism of modern times, however, are clearly distinguishable under close observance of the current

flow of events. Perhaps, these pioneer forces will grow and become surer of themselves when scholarship has found answers to these spiritual problems through the study of the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), of his teachings, of his age, and of the spiritual world revolution which he incepted."

Dr. Haykal's firm conviction is corroborated by real events. What we have witnessed today of the West's concern for the study of our heritage and the care with which western scholars study the legacy of Islam, its various contents, its ancient and modern history and peoples, of the fair treatment that some of them give to the career of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and finally, what we know by experience of the necessary final victory of truth—all this leads to the consideration that Islam will spread all over the world. In this process, the strongest protagonists of Islam may well be its strongest enemies whereas its present alien antagonists may be Islam's adherents and defenders. As in the early period the strangers have supported Islam, strangers may yet help it achieve its final victory. It is said that "Islam began as a stranger and will return as a stranger. Allah bless the strangers!"

Since the Prophet (P.B.U.H), was the last of the prophets and the world is to have no prophet after him, and since, as the Revealed text has said, his religion is the most perfect, it is not possible that the *status quo* of Islam will last. Its light must necessarily eclipse all other lights as the rays of the sun eclipse those of the stars.

Dr. Haykal related the events of the Prophet's life (P.B.U.H) closely to one another. His book therefore presents a closely knit argument. In every case, he has elaborated strong evidence and articulated it clearly and convincingly. His work is not only persuasive; it is pleasant reading and it moves the reader to keep on reading to the very end.

Furthermore, the book contains many studies which do not properly belong to the biography of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) but

are necessitated by the author's pursuit of questions related thereto. Finally, let me conclude this prefatory note with the prayer of the Master of all men (P.B.U.H), his family and his followers: "Allah, I take shelter under the light of Your face before Whom darkness became light, by Whose command this world and the next were firmly established. Save me from Your wrath and displeasure. To You alone belongs the judgment, harsh as it may be when You are not pleased. There is neither power nor strength except in You."

15 February, 1935 Muhammad Mustafā al Maraghi
Grand Imam Sheikh of Al Azhar

﴿ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتَهُۥ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى ٱلنَّبِيِّۚ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ صَلُّواْ عَلَيۡهِ وَسَلِّمُواْ تَسۡلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾ ﴾ سورة الأحزاب آية ٥٦

(Allah and His Angels send blessings on the Prophet: O you that believe! Send blessings on him, and salute him with all respect.) (Al Ahzab:56)

بِسۡمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ ﴿١﴾

﴿ ٱلۡحَمۡدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٢﴾ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣﴾ مَٰلِكِ يَوۡمِ ٱلدِّينِ ﴿٤﴾ إِيَّاكَ نَعۡبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسۡتَعِينُ ﴿٥﴾ ٱهۡدِنَا ٱلصِّرَٰطَ ٱلۡمُسۡتَقِيمَ ﴿٦﴾ صِرَٰطَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَنۡعَمۡتَ عَلَيۡهِمۡ غَيۡرِ ٱلۡمَغۡضُوبِ عَلَيۡهِمۡ وَلَا ٱلضَّآلِّينَ ﴿٧﴾ ﴾ سورة الفاتحة الآيات ١ ـ ٧

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

(Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds; Most Gracious, Most Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment. you do we worship, and Your aid we seek, Show us the straight way, The way of those on whom you have bestowed Your Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath. And who go not astray.) (Al- Fatiha: 1-7)



The Word of the Author

Muhammad, (P.B.U.H)! This noble name has been on the lips of countless millions of men. For almost fourteen centuries, millions of hearts have palpitated with deep emotion at the pronouncement of it. Many more millions of people for a period as long as time, will pronounce it, and will be deeply moved thereby. Every day, as soon as the black thread becomes distinguishable from the white, the muezzin will call men to prayer. He will call them to the worship of Allah and the invocation of blessing upon His Prophet (P.B.U.H), a task the fulfillment of which is better for them than their sleep. Thousands and millions of men in every corner of the globe will undoubtedly respond to the muezzin's call, springing to honor through their prayers Allah's mercy and bounty, richly evidenced for them with the break of every new day. At high noon, the muezzin will call again for the noon prayer; then at mid-afternoon, at sunset, and after sunset. On each of these daily occasions Muslims remember Muhammad (P.B.U.H), the servant of Allah and His Prophet (P.B.U.H), with all reverence and piety. Even in between these prayers the Muslims never hear the name of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) but they hasten to praise Allah and His chosen one. Thus they have been, and thus they will be until Allah vindicates His true religion and completes His bounty to all.

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) did not have to wait long for his religion to become known, or for his dominion to spread. Allah has seen fit to complete the religion of Islam even before his

death (P.B.U.H). It was he who laid down the plans for the propagation of this religion. He had sent to Chosroes, to Heraclius and other princes and kings of the world inviting them to join the new faith. No more than a hundred and fifty years passed from then until the flags of Islam were flying high between Spain in the west and India, Turkestan and indeed China in the east. Thus by joining Islam, the territories of al Sham Iraq, Persia, and Afghanistan have linked the Arabian Peninsula with the kingdom of "the Son of Heaven." On the other hand, the Islāmization of Egypt, Burqah, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco have linked the native land of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) with Europe and Africa. From that time until our day Islam remains supreme throughout all these territories. It withdrew from Spain only under the attack of Christendom which inflicted upon the people of Spain all kinds of suffering and persecution. As the people could not bear these tragedies, some of them returned to Africa. Others under the threats of fear and panic apostasized, withdrew from the religion of their ancestors, and entered into that of the tyrants and conquerors.

What Islam had lost in Spain and in Western Europe was regained when the Ottomans conquered Constantinople and established the religion of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) therein. From there, Islam spread throughout the Balkans into Russia and Poland and spread over territories many times wider than Spain. From the day of its initial conquest until now, no religion has ever conquered Islam despite the fact that its people have fallen under all kinds of tyrannies and unjust governments. Indeed, reduction of their worldly power has made the Muslims more strongly attached to their faith, to their Islamic way of life, and to their Islamic hope.

Islam and Christianity

The power with which Islam quickly spread brought it face to face with Christianity and involved the two religions in a *guerre* a *outrance.* Muhammad (P.B.U.H) vanquished paganism and eliminated it from Arabia just as his early successors pursued it across Persia, Afghanistan and a good portion of India and eliminated it from these territories. Later on the successors of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) conquered Christianity in Hirah, Yaman, Syria, Egypt, and even in the capital of the Christian empire, Constantinople. Was Christianity then to receive the same fate of extinction which befell paganism despite the fact that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had praised it and confirmed the prophethood of its founder? Were the Arabs, coming out of their arid desert peninsula, destined to conquer the gardens of Spain, of Byzantium, and all Christendom? "No! Death rather than such a fate! "Thus the fight continued for many centuries between the followers of Jesus and the followers of Muhammad (P.B.U.H). The war was not limited to swords and guns. It spread out to the fields of debate and controversy where the contenders contended in the names of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and Jesus. No means were spared to sway the community, to arouse the populace and to stir the passions of the people.

The Muslims and Jesus

Islam, however, prevented the Muslims from attacking the person of Jesus. It held that Jesus was a servant of Allah endowed with scripture and appointed as prophet. It also held that Jesus was always blessed; that he was enjoined as long as he lived to hold prayer and to give *zakat;* that his mother was innocent and that he was neither unjust nor unfortunate. It asserted that Jesus was blessed on the day of his birth, on the day

of his future death as well as on the day of his resurrection. Many Christians, on the other hand, have attacked the person of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and attributed to him the most unbecoming epithets—thereby giving vent to their resentment and sowing the seeds of hatred and hostility. Despite the commonly held view that the Crusades have long been finished and forgotten, fanatic Christian antagonism still continues to rage against Muhammad (P.B.U.H). The present situation has not changed except perhaps for the worse. Moved by the same fanaticism, the missionaries resort to immoral and depraved means in their struggle against Islam. This fanaticism was never exclusive to the Church. It stirred and inspired many writers and philosophers in Europe and America who are not related to the Church.

CHRISTIAN FANATICS AND MUHAMMAD (P.B.U.H)

One may wonder why Christian fanaticism against Islam continues to rage with such power in an age which is claimed to be the age of light and science, of tolerance and *largeur de coeur*. This fanaticism is all the more surprising when one remembers that the early Muslims were overjoyed at the news of the victory of Christianity over Zoroastrianism, when the armies of Heraclius carried the day against those of Chosroes. Persia had a dominant influence in South Arabia ever since the Persians expelled the Abyssinians from Yaman. Chosroes had sent his army in 614 C.E. under the command of his general named Shahrbarāz to conquer Byzantium. When their armies met in Adhri'at and Busrā, territories of al Sham close to Arabia, the Persians inflicted upon the Byzantines heavy losses in lives and destroyed their cities and orchards. The Arabs, especially the people of Makkah, used to follow the news of this war with great anxiety. At the time, the two hostile powers were the greatest on

earth. The Arabs adjoined both powers and had territories which fell under the suzerainty of both. The Makkan idolaters rejoiced at the defeat of the Christians and celebrated the event. They regarded them as people with a scripture, very much like the Muslims, and they even attempted to attribute their defeat to their religion. For the Muslims, it was hard to believe the defeat of the Byzantines for the same reason, namely that like them they were a people with scripture. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his companions especially hated to see the Zoroastrians victorious. This difference in the views of the Muslims and the idolaters of Makkah led to open contention between the two groups. The Muslims were ridiculed for holding such opinions. One of them was so bold in his show of joy in front of Abū Bakr that the latter, known for his great calm and friendliness, was prompted to say:

"Don't take to joy too soon. The Byzantines will avenge themselves." When the idolater rejoined, "This is a lie," Abū Bakr became angry and said: "You are the liar, O Enemy of Allah:

I wager ten camels that the Byzantines will win against the Zoroastrians within the scope of a year." When this came to the notice of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), he advised Abū Bakr to increase the amount of the wager and to extend its term. Abū Bakr then raised the wager to one hundred camels and extended the time to nine years. In 625 C.E. Heraclius was victorious. He defeated Persia and wrenched from it the territory of Syria as well as the cross of Christ. Abū Bakr won his wager and the prophesying of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was confirmed in the following Qur'ānic Revelation:

﴿ الٓمٓ ۝١ غُلِبَتِ ٱلرُّومُ ۝٢ فِيٓ أَدۡنَى ٱلۡأَرۡضِ وَهُم مِّنۢ بَعۡدِ
غَلَبِهِمۡ سَيَغۡلِبُونَ ۝٣ فِي بِضۡعِ سِنِينَۗ لِلَّهِ ٱلۡأَمۡرُ مِن قَبۡلُ وَمِنۢ

بَعْدُ ۚ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾ بِنَصْرِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ يَنصُرُ مَن يَشَآءُ ۖ وَهُوَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥﴾ وَعْدَ ٱللَّهِ ۖ لَا يُخْلِفُ ٱللَّهُ وَعْدَهُۥ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ ٱلنَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦﴾ ﴾ سورة الروم الآيات ١ - ٦

(Alif Lam Mim. The Romans have been defeated, in a land close by: but they, (even) after (this) defeat of theirs, will soon be victorious,
Within a few years. With Allah is the Command in the Past and in the Future: on that Day shall the Believers rejoice, with the help of Allah. He gives victory to whom He will, and He is Exalted in Might, Most Merciful. (It is) the promise of Allah. Never does Allah fail from His promise: but most men know not.) (Ar- Rum: 1- 6)

The First Principles of the Two Religions

Muslim rejoicing at the victory of Heraclius and his Christian armies was great. Despite the many controversies that had taken place between the followers of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and those who believed in Jesus, their friendly and fraternal relationships continued to be strong throughout the life of the Prophet (P.B.U.H). It was otherwise with the relationships of Muslims and Jews. There had been an armistice followed by alienation and war with consequences so disastrous and bloody that the Jews had to be moved out of the Arabian Peninsula altogether. The Qur'ān confirms the bond of friendship between Muslims and Christians and denounces the enmity of the Jews. It advises the Muslims, Allah the Almighty said in the Holy Qur'an:-

﴿ ۞ لَتَجِدَنَّ أَشَدَّ ٱلنَّاسِ عَدَٰوَةً لِّلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱلْيَهُودَ وَٱلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا۟ ۖ وَلَتَجِدَنَّ أَقْرَبَهُم مَّوَدَّةً لِّلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّا نَصَـٰرَىٰ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ مِنْهُمْ قِسِّيسِينَ وَرُهْبَانًا وَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ ﴾ سورة المائدة آية ٨٢

(Strongest among men in enmity to the Believers will you find the Jews and Pagans; and nearest among them in love to the Believers will you find those who say, "We are Christians": because amongst these are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant.) (Al- Ma'idah: 82)

Indeed Christianity and Islam entertain the same view of life and ethics. Their view of mankind and of creation is one and the same. Both religions believe that Allah created Adam and Eve, placed them in paradise and commanded them not to listen to Satan, and that eating of the tree thereby caused them to be discharged. Both religions believe that Satan is the enemy of mankind who, according to the Qur'ān, refused to prostrate himself to Adam when commanded to do so by Allah and, according to Christian scripture, refused to honor the word of Allah. Satan whispered to Eve and deceived her, and she in turn deceived Adam. They ate from the tree of eternal life, discovered their nakedness, and then pleaded to Allah to forgive them. Allah sent them to earth, their descendants enemies of one another, forever open to the deception of Satan, some of them liable to fall under this deception and others capable of resisting it to the end. In order to transcend man's war against this deception, Allah sent Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and the other prophets, commis-

sioning every one of them to convey in the tongue of his people a book which confirms, elaborates, and makes evident the Revelations received from his predecessor-prophet. As Satan is assisted by his helpers among the evil spirits, the angels praise the Lord and adore Him. Both the good and the evil powers therefore compete to win mankind until the Day of Judgment when every soul will receive that which it has earned and when everyone will be responsible for himself alone.

The Difference between Them

Not only has the Qur'an mentioned Jesus and Mary, but it has honored them and presented them in such light that the readers cannot but feel this fraternal feeling towards Christianity when they read its verses. It is all the more perplexing, therefore, that the Muslims and Christians have continued to fight each other century after century. The confusion disappears however, when we learn that Islam has differed from Christianity in many fundamental matters which were subjects of strong controversy, without ever leading to hatred and hostility. Christianity does not acknowledge the prophethood of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as Islam acknowledges the prophethood of Jesus. Moreover, Christianity upholds trinitarianism whereas Islam strongly rejects anything but the strictest monotheism. The Christians apotheosize Jesus and, in their argument with Muslims, seek confirmation of his divinity in the Qur'ānic assertion that he spoke out in the cradle (19:29—34) and in the many miracles which he alone had been favored by Allah to perform. During the early days of Islam, the Christians used to dispute with the Muslims in the following vein: Doesn't the Qur'ān itself, which was revealed to Muhammad (P.B.U.H), confirm our view when The Holy Qur'an says:

﴿ إِذْ قَالَتِ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ يَٰمَرْيَمُ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ ٱسْمُهُ
ٱلْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ٱبْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْءَاخِرَةِ وَمِنَ ٱلْمُقَرَّبِينَ
﴿٤٥﴾ وَيُكَلِّمُ ٱلنَّاسَ فِى ٱلْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾
قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لِى وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمْسَسْنِى بَشَرٌ ۖ قَالَ كَذَٰلِكِ ٱللَّهُ
يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۚ إِذَا قَضَىٰٓ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَيُعَلِّمُهُ
ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ وَٱلتَّوْرَىٰةَ وَٱلْإِنجِيلَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ
أَنِّى قَدْ جِئْتُكُم بِـَٔايَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ ۖ أَنِّىٓ أَخْلُقُ لَكُم مِّنَ ٱلطِّينِ
كَهَيْـَٔةِ ٱلطَّيْرِ فَأَنفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًۢا بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَأُبْرِئُ ٱلْأَكْمَهَ
وَٱلْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْىِ ٱلْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَأُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا
تَدَّخِرُونَ فِى بُيُوتِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ فِى ذَٰلِكَ لَءَايَةً لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ
﴿٤٩﴾ ﴾ سورة آل عمران الآيات ٤٥- ٤٩

(Behold! The angels said: "O Mary! Allah gives you glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to Allah;
"He shall speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. And he shall be (of the company) of the righteous."
She said: "O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man has touched me?" He said: "Even so: Allah creates what He wills: when He has decreed a matter, He but says to it, `Be', and it is!

"And Allah will teach him the Book and Wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel,

"And (appoint him) a Messenger to the Children of Israel, (with this message): "I have come to you, with a Sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah's Leave: and I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I bring the dead into live by Allah's leave; and I declare to you what you eat, and what you store in your houses. Surely therein is a Sign for you if you did believe ;) (Al-'Imran: 45-49)

The Qur'ān then did declare that Jesus would resurrect the dead and give vision to the blind and heal the leper, create birds out of clay and prophesy—all of which are Divine prerogatives. Such was the view of the Christians who, at the time of the Prophet (P.B.U.H), were disputing and arguing with him that Jesus was a god besides Allah. Another group of them apotheosized Mary on the grounds that she had been the recipient of Allah's command. The Christian adherents to this view regarded Mary as a member of a trinity which included the Father, the Son and the Holy spirit However, those who held that Jesus and his mother were divine were but one of the many sects into which Christianity was divided in those days.

Debate of the Christians with the Prophet (P.B.U.H)

The Christians of the Arabian Peninsula debated with Muhammad (P.B.U.H) on the basis of their diverse views. They argued that Jesus was God, that Jesus was the Son of Allah, that Jesus was the third person of the trinity. The apotheosizers of Jesus had recourse to the foregoing argument. Those who held the view that Jesus was the Son of Allah argued that he had no known father that he had spoken out in the cradle as no other

human had ever done. Those who held that he was the third person of the trinity argued that Allah referred to Himself as "We" in His acts of creation, of commanding and providing, and that this was evidence for His plurality—for otherwise He would have referred to Himself as "I." Muhammad (P.B.U.H) used to listen to all these arguments and debate with them in kindness. He (P.B.U.H) never showed in his debates the hardness and seventies which characterized his debates with the associationists and the worshipers of idols. Rather, he (P.B.U.H) argued with them on the basis of Revealed scripture and based himself on what could be deduced therefrom. Allah the Almighty in the Holy Qur'an said:

﴿ لَقَدْ كَفَرَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ ٱلْمَسِيحُ ٱبْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۚ قُلْ
فَمَن يَمْلِكُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ شَيْـًٔا إِنْ أَرَادَ أَن يُهْلِكَ ٱلْمَسِيحَ ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ
وَأُمَّهُۥ وَمَن فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ۗ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَمَا
بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٧﴾ وَقَالَتِ ٱلْيَهُودُ
وَٱلنَّصَـٰرَىٰ نَحْنُ أَبْنَـٰٓؤُا۟ ٱللَّهِ وَأَحِبَّـٰٓؤُهُۥ ۚ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُم بِذُنُوبِكُم ۖ بَلْ
أَنتُم بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ ۚ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَآءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَآءُ ﴾

سورة المائدة الآيات ١٧ - ١٨

(They disbelieved indeed those that say that Allah is the Christ the son of Mary. Say: "Who then has the least power against Allah, if His Will were to destroy Christ the son of Mary, his mother, and all, every one that is on the earth? For to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between. He creates what He

pleases. For Allah has power over all things."

(Both) the Jews and the Christians say: "We are sons of Allah, and His beloved." Say: "Why then does He punish you for your sins? Nay, you are but men, of the men He has created: He forgives whom He pleases, and He punishes whom He pleases) (Al- Ma'idah :17-18)

Allah the Almighty said:-

﴿ لَقَدْ كَفَرَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ ٱلْمَسِيحُ ٱبْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۖ
وَقَالَ ٱلْمَسِيحُ يَٰبَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ رَبِّى وَرَبَّكُمْ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ مَن
يُشْرِكْ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ ٱلْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَىٰهُ ٱلنَّارُ ۖ وَمَا لِلظَّٰلِمِينَ
مِنْ أَنصَارٍ ﴿٧٢﴾ لَّقَدْ كَفَرَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلَٰثَةٍ ۘ وَمَا مِنْ
إِلَٰهٍ إِلَّآ إِلَٰهٌ وَٰحِدٌ ۚ وَإِن لَّمْ يَنتَهُوا۟ عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا۟ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ ﴾ سورة المائدة الآيات (٧٢-٧٣)

Certainly they disbelieve who say: "Allah is Christ the son of Mary." But Christ said: "O Children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord." Whoever joins other gods with Allah, Allah will forbid him the Garden, and the Fire will be his abode. There will for the wrong-doers be no one to help. They do disbelieve who say: Allah is one of three (in a Trinity): but there is no god except One God. If they desist not from their word (of blasphemy), verily a grievous Chastisement will befall the disbelievers among them) (Al- Ma'idah:72:73)

Allah the Almighty also said:

﴿ وَإِذْ قَالَ ٱللَّهُ يَٰعِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ ءَأَنتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ ٱتَّخِذُونِى وَأُمِّىَ إِلَٰهَيْنِ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ قَالَ سُبْحَٰنَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِىٓ أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِى بِحَقٍّ ۚ إِن كُنتُ قُلْتُهُۥ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُۥ ۚ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِى نَفْسِى وَلَآ أَعْلَمُ مَا فِى نَفْسِكَ ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ عَلَّٰمُ ٱلْغُيُوبِ ﴿١١٦﴾ مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَآ أَمَرْتَنِى بِهِۦٓ أَنِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ رَبِّى وَرَبَّكُمْ ۚ وَكُنتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَّا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ ۖ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِى كُنتَ أَنتَ ٱلرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ وَأَنتَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿١١٧﴾ إِن تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ ۖ وَإِن تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْحَكِيمُ ﴿١١٨﴾ ﴾

سورة المائدة الآيات ١١٦ ـ ١١٨

And behold! Allah will say: "O Jesus the son of Mary! Did you say unto men, 'take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah'?" He will say: "Glory to you! Never could I say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, you would indeed have known it. You know what is in my heart, though I know not what is in Yours. For You know in full all that is hidden. "Never said I to them anything except what you did command me to say, to wit, 'Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord'; and I was a witness over them while I dwelt amongst them; when you did take me up You were the Watcher over them, and You are a witness to all things. "If you do punish them, they are Your servants: if You do forgive them, You are the Exalted in power, the Wise."(Al- Ma'idah:116-118)

Christianity upholds the trinitarian view and claims that Jesus is the Son of Allah. Islam, on the other hand, categorically denies that Allah could possibly have a son.

Allah the Almighty said:

﴿ قُلْ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝١ ٱللَّهُ ٱلصَّمَدُ ۝٢ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝٣ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُۥ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌۢ ۝٤ ﴾ سورة الإخلاص الآيات ١-٤

(Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begets not, nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him.) (Al-Ikhlas:1-4)

It is not possible for Allah the Almighty to take unto Himself a son.

﴿ إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ ءَادَمَ خَلَقَهُۥ مِن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ ۝٥٩ ﴾ سورة آل عمران آية ٥٩

(The similitude of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him "Be": and he was.) (Al-'Imran:59)

Islam is monotheistic *par excellence;* the unity of Allah it teaches the most categorical, the clearest, the simplest, and therefore the strongest. Whatever casts the slightest doubt upon the unity of Allah is strongly rejected by Islam and declared blasphemous.

﴿ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ ۚ ﴾

سورة النساء آية ٤٨

(Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgives anything else, to whom He pleases) (An-Nisaa:48)

Whatever connection Christianity may have had with ancient religions as far as its trinitarian doctrine is concerned furnished no justification at all in the eye of Muhammad (P.B.U.H). The truth is that Allah is One and Unique, that He has no associates, that He has neither progeny nor ancestry and that He is absolutely without parallel. It is no wonder therefore that controversy arose between Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and the Christians of his time that he debated with them in kindness and that Revelation confirmed Muhammad (P.B.U.H) with the foregoing Qur'ānic corroborations.

The Question of Jesus' Crucifixion

Another problem in which Islam differed from Christianity and which aroused controversy at the time of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) is that of the crucifixion of Jesus as atonement for the sins of mankind. The Qur'ān clearly denies that the Jews had killed or crucified the Messiah. The Holy Qur'an says:

﴿ وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا ٱلْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ ٱللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ

وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَٰكِن شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ ۚ وَإِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فِيهِ لَفِى شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ ۚ مَا

لَهُم بِهِۦ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا ٱتِّبَاعَ ٱلظَّنِّ ۚ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا ۝ بَل رَّفَعَهُ ٱللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ ۚ

وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴾ سورة النساء الآيات ١٥٧-١٥٨

That they said (in boast), "We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah"; but they killed him not, nor crucified him, Only a likeness of that was shown to them. And those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge. But only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not. Nay, Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.) (An-Nisaa:157-158)

Despite the fact that the idea of the Messiah's sacrifice and his atonement for the sins of mankind with his own blood is undoubtedly beautiful and the writings it had inspired are worthy of poetical, moral, and psychological analysis, Islam founded itself upon the principle that moral guilt is non-transferable and that on the Day of Judgment justice shall be meted out to each according to his due. This fact rules out any logical rapprochement between the two doctrines. The *logique* of Islam is so precise on this matter and so clear and distinct that the difference between it and Christianity cannot be composed. The doctrine of sacrificial atonement runs diametrically counter to that of personal justice.

﴿ لَّا يَجْزِى وَالِدٌ عَن وَلَدِهِۦ وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ هُوَ جَازٍ عَن وَالِدِهِۦ

شَيْـًٔا ﴾ سورة لقمان آية ٣٣

(When no father can avail anything for his son, nor a son avail anything for his father.) (Luqman: 33)

Byzantines and Muslims

Did any Christians at the time consider this new religion and ponder the possibility of harmonizing its "unization" of Allah and their revelation of Jesus? Indeed! And many of them joined it as a result. The Byzantines, however, whose victory the Muslims had celebrated and regarded as the victory of the scriptural religions, did not take the trouble to Investigate this new religion. Rather, they looked at it from a political angle, and worried about their dominion should the new religion carry the day. They therefore began to attack it and its people and sent an army of a hundred thousand soldiers (or of two hundred thousand according to another report) against it. This led to the conquest of Tabūk by the Muslims and the retreat of the Byzantines in front of the army which rallied around Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to repulse the aggression with such power and determination as it deserved.

Ever since then, Muslims and Christians have followed a policy of hostility towards each other; for many centuries victory was on the side of the Muslims, enabling them to extend their empire from Spain in the west to India and China in the east. Most of the inhabitants of this empire joined the new faith and adopted its Arabic language. When history came full cycle, the Christians forced the Muslims from Spain, launched the Crusades against them, and began to attack their religion and Prophet (P.B.U.H) with falsehoods, lies, and forgeries. In their prejudice, they forgot the great respect and honor accorded to Jesus—may Allah's blessing be upon him—by Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as the tradition has reported and the Qur'ān, the Revelation to Muhammad (P.B.U.H), has stated.

Christian Scholars and Muhammad (P.B.U.H)

In presenting the views Christian scholars had of Muhammad

(P.B.U.H) during the first half of the nineteenth century, the French *Encyclopedia Larousse* stated: "Muhammad (P.B.U.H) remained in his moral corruption and debauchery a camel thief, a cardinal who failed to reach the throne of the papacy and win it for himself. He therefore invented a new religion with which to avenge himself against his colleagues. Many fanciful and immoral tales dominated his mind and conduct. The *Life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H)* by Bahomet is an example of this kind of literature. Other books on Muhammad (P.B.U.H), such as those published by Renault and François Michel in 1831, illustrate the idea of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) prevalent in the Middle Ages. In the seventeenth century, Peel looked at the Qur'ān from a historian's point of view. But he refused to divulge his conclusions to his readers though he acknowledged that the ethical and social system of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) does not differ from the Christian system except in the theory of punishment and polygamy."

Emil Dermenghem, the French writer, was one of the few orientalists who investigated the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) with some objectivity. Quoting some of the writings of his colleagues, he wrote: "After the war between Islam and Christianity had been going on for centuries, the misunderstanding naturally increased and we are forced to admit the most serious ones were on the side of the Occidentals. Numerous were the Byzantine polemists who covered Islam with their contempt without taking the trouble to study it (with perhaps the exception of St. John of Damascus), as well as the writers and minstrels who fought the Saracens with only ridiculous calumnies. They portrayed Mahomet as a camel-thief, a rake, sorcerer, a brigand chief, and even as a Roman cardinal furious at not having been elected pope . . . they showed him as a false god to whom the faithful made human sacrifices.

"The worthy Guibert de Nogent himself tells us that he

(Muhammad) (P.B.U.H) died through excessive drunkenness and that his corpse was eaten by pigs on a dunghill, explaining why the flesh of this animal and wine are prohibited . . .

"The opposition of the two religions had not, in the main, any more serious foundations than the affirmations of heroic songs portraying Mahomet, the iconoclast, as a golden-idol, and Mussulman mosques as pantheons filled with images! The *Song of Antioch* describes, as if the author had seen it, a massive idol, Mahom, in gold and silver enthroned on the mosaic seat of an elephant. The *Song of Roland,* which shows Charlemagne's horsemen throwing down Mussulman idols, tells us that the Saracens worshiped a Trinity composed of Termagant, Mahom and Apollo. The *Roman de Mahomet* asserts the Islam permitted polyandry. .

"Hate and prejudice were tenacious of life. From the time of Rudolph de Ludheim (620) until the present, Nicholas de Cuse, Vives, Maracci, Hottinger, Bibliander, Prideaux, etc. present Mohamet as an impostor, Islam as the cluster of all the heresies and the work of the devil, the Mussulmans as brutes, and the Koran as a tissue of absurdities. They declined to treat such a ridiculous subject seriously. However, Pierre le Vénérable, author of the first Occidental treatise against Islam, made a Latin translation of the Koran in the twelfth century. Innocent III once called Mahomet Antichrist, while in the Middle Ages he was nearly always merely looked upon as a heretic. Raymond Lull in the fourteenth century, Guillaume Postel in the sixteenth, Roland and Gagnier in the eigtheenth, the Abbé de Brolie and Renan in the nineteenth give rather varied opinions. Voltaire, afterwards, amended in several places the hasty judgment expressed in his famous tragedy. Montesquieu, like Pascal and Malebranche, committed serious blunders on the religion, but his views of the manners and customs of the Mussulmans are well-considered and often reasonable. Le Comte de Boulainvilliers, Scholl, Caussin de Perceval, Dozy, Sprenger, Barthélemy, Saint-Hilaire

de Castries, Carlyle, etc., are generally favorable to Islam and its Prophet (P.B.U.H) and sometimes vindicate him. In 1876 Doughty nonetheless called Mahomet 'a dirty and perfidious nomad,' while in 1822 Foster declared that 'Mahomet was Daniel's little goat's horn while the Pope was the large one.' Islam still has many ardent detractors."

What a nether world of degradation have the writers of the West sunk to! What chronic, centuries-old obstinacy to go astray and to stir hatred and hostility between men! Many of the aforementioned men belonged to the Age of Enlightenment, the century of science, of free thought and research, and of the establishment of brotherhood between man and man. Perhaps the gravity of this unfortunate chronicle is somewhat attenuated by the fact that a number of objective scholars, mentioned by Dermenghem, have accepted the truthfulness of Muhammad's faith (P.B.U.H) in the message which Allah had Revealed to him (P.B.U.H), have commended the spiritual and moral greatness of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), his nobility and virtue, or have written about all these matters in literary and eloquent style. On the whole, however, the West continued to attack Islam and its prophet (P.B.U.H) in the harshest possible terms. Indeed, western impertinence has gone so far as to spread Christian missionaries throughout the Muslim World, to urge them to dig their claws into its body, to dissuade the Muslims from their religion and to convert them to Christianity.

The Cause of Hostility between Islam and Christianity

We must search for the cause of this stormy hostility and fierce war which Christianity has been waging against Islam. We believe that western ignorance of the truth of Islam and of the life of its Prophet (P.B.U.H) constitutes the first cause of this

hostility. Without a doubt, ignorance is one of the most chronic causes of lethargy, conservatism and prejudice; and it is the most difficult to correct.

Ignorance and Fanaticism

This ignorance is centuries old. Over the years it has set up in the souls of generations idols of its own whose destruction will require a spiritual strength as great as that which characterized Islam when it first made its appearance. However, it is our opinion that there is yet another cause behind this fanaticism of the West and the terrible war it has waged and still wages against the Muslims, century after century. We are not here referring to political ambitions, or to the will of states to subjugate people for the purpose of exploiting them. In our opinion this is the result and not the cause of the fanaticism which goes beyond science and all its researches.

Christianity Does Not Accord with the Nature of Western Man

This deeper lying cause, we think, is the fact that Christianity—with its call for asceticism, other-worldliness, forgiveness, and the high personalist values—does not accord with the nature of western man whose religious life had for thousands of years been determined by polytheism and whose geographic position had imposed upon him the struggle against extreme cold and inclement nature. When historical circumstances brought about his Christianization, it was necessary for him to interpret it as a religion of struggle and to alter its tolerant and gentle nature. Thereby western man spoiled the spiritual sequence, completed by Islam, in which Christianity stood as a link in the chain. This

spiritual continuum reconciles the claims of the body with those of the spirit; it synthesizes in harmony emotion and reason. It is a system which integrates the individual, indeed mankind, as a natural part of the cosmos and co-existent with it in its infinity of space and time. In our view, this spoiling is the cause of the fanaticism of the West *vis-à-vis* Islam and the cause of an attitude which Christian Abyssinia found beneath its dignity to adopt when the Muslims sought its protection at the beginning of the Prophet's career.

It is with reference to this cause that we can explain the exaggerated religiosity of western man as well as his extremist irreligiosity. For here too western fanatacism and hostility know neither tolerance nor temperance. Admittedly, history has known many saints among western men who in their lives have followed the example of Jesus and his disciples. But it cannot be denied that this same history affirms the life of the western people to be one of struggle, power, antagonism, and bloody war in the name of politics or religion. Nor can it be denied that the popes of the Church as well as the secular rulers have always engaged one another in strife: that one or the other was one day conqueror and the other vanquished. As secular power emerged victorious in the nineteenth century, it sought to stamp out the life of the spirit in the name of science, claiming that the latter should replace religious faith in human spirituality. Nowadays, after a long struggle, the West has come to realize its error and the impossibility of what it sought to achieve. Voices are now being heard from all sides demanding to regain the lost spirituality by looking for it in the new theosophic and other schools. Had Christianity accorded with the instinct of strife which among westerners is the law of life, they would have realized the bank-ruptcy of materialism to furnish them with the needed spiritual power. They then would have returned to the noble Christian religion of Jesus, son of Mary, unless Allah were to guide them toward Islam. They would not have needed to

emigrate to India and other places to obtain a necessary spiritual life. Such spirituality is of the essence of the religion of Jesus, indeed its very nature and being.

Colonialism and Christian Mission against Islam

Western colonialism helped the West to continue its war against Islam and Muhammad (P.B.U.H). It encouraged the West to proclaim that Islam is the cause of the decadance of its adherents and their subjugation by others. Many western sèholars still subscribe to this claim unaware that by doing so they cede the point to the Makkans who proclaimed thirteen centuries ago that Chritianity is responsible for the shameful defeat of Heraclius and Byzantium by Persia, as well as to anyone who wishes to make use of the argument to explain Christendom's retreat under the blows of the Muslims. One fact alone is sufficient to refute such an obvious piece of falsehood. That is the fact that the civilization of Islam was dominant in, and its people sovereign over, the whole known world for many centuries; that in the Muslim world arose greater men of science and knowledge who lived and worked in an atmosphere of freedom which the West was not to know until very recently. If it were at all possible to attribute to a religion the decay of its adherents, no such imputation is possible in the case of Islam which aroused the Bedouins of the Arabian Peninsula and enabled them to dominate the world.

Islam and the Present State of the Islamic Peoples

Those who impute to Islam responsibility for the decay of the Islamic peoples are partially right in the fact that there was added to the religion of Allah much which neither Allah nor His

Prophet (P.B.U.H) would have approved of. Such additions soon became integral to the religion, and whoever denied them was declared a heretic. Apart from the doctrine itself let us take a close look at the biography of the Prophet of Islam (P.B.U.H). Most of his biographies have narrated stories which no reason would accept and which no confirmation of Muhammad's prophethood needed. It was from such additions that the western orientalists and critics of Islam, of its Prophet (P.B.U.H) and of the Muslim peoples, drew their conclusions and formed their unjust and revolting attacks. After basing themselves on these incoherent assumptions, they launched further attacks and claimed for what they wrote the status of modern scientific research. The scientific method demands that events, people, and heroes be presented objectively, that the author's judgment be given only in light of the given evidence. The writings of these authors, however, were dictated by their passion for controversy and vituperation. They were aptly cast in expressions which deluded their co-religionists into believing that they were scientific, and that they were made in seeking after truth alone. Nonetheless, Allah did grant His peace to a number of contented souls, for among them there were men of letters, men of science, and other free thinkers who came closer to justice and fairness.

Conservatism and Ijtihad among the Muslims

A number of 'ulamā' in different circumstances responded to the claims of these western fanatics. The name of Mohammad 'Abduh shines most in this regard. But they have not observed the scientific method which the European writers and historians claim to have observed. Their argument would not have the same power as that of their opponents. Moreover, the same Muslim scholars—Mohammad 'Abduh above all others—were accused of heresy and blasphemy—a fact which weakened their

argument before the opponents of Islam. Such accusations as were directed at them left deep impressions in the hearts of educated Muslim youths. These young men felt that for a group of Muslim 'ulama' adjudication by reason and logic amounts to heresy, that heresy is the twin of *ijtihād,* and that *iman* is the twin of conservatism. Hence their minds panicked, and they rushed to the books of the West seeking to learn the truth which they believed was not to be found in the books of Muslim authors. They did not at all consider the books of Christianity and of Christian history. Instead, they turned to the books of philosophy to quench their burning thirst for the truth. In western logic and scientific method they sought the light with which to illuminate their human souls, and the means by which to communicate with the universe. In the western products of pure philosophy, literature, and allied fields, these men found many great ideas by which they were deeply impressed. The methods of their presentation, the precision of their logic and their authors' candidness in the search for the truth added all the more to their attractiveness. That is why our youths' thinking was drawn away from all the religions in general and from the methods of Islam and its carriers in particular.

They were anxious not to stir a war with conservatism which they were not confident they could win, and they did not realize that spiritual intercourse with the universe is the necessary requisite of any human realization of perfection, of that moral power which is strong enough to withstand the storms.

Western Science and Literature

Our young men were thus drawn away from serious confrontation with the Islamic message and its carriers. In this they were encouraged by what they observed of positive science and positivist philosophy, ruling for them that religious questions

are not subject to logic, that they do not fall within the realm of scientific thinking, and that the metaphysical assumptions implied in those questions fall outside the realm of the scientific method. Our men have also observed the clear separation of state and church in the western countries. They learned that despite the fact that the constitutions of these countries prescribe that their kings are the protectors of Protestantism or Catholicism, or that the official religion of the state is Christianity, the Western states do not mean any more than to subscribe to the public observance of the feasts and other occasions of the Christian calendar. Hence they were encouraged to enter into this line of scientific thinking and to derive therefrom, as well as from the related philosophy, literature and art, all the inspiration possible. When the time came to transfer their attention from study to practical life, their occupations pulled them away further from those problems which they could not solve even at the time of their study. Their minds, therefore, continued to run in their original courses. They looked at conservatism with contempt and pity and drew their nourishment from the lifeline of western thought and philosophy. Remembering this lifeline as the source from which they obtained their nourishment in their youth, they continued to find therein their intellectual pleasure; their admiration for it was always growing.

Nevertheless, the Orient stands today in great need of learning from western thought, literature and art. The present of the Orient is separated from its past by centuries of lethargy and conservatism which have locked its old healthy mind in ignorance and suspicion of anything new. Anyone who seeks to dissolve this thick curtain must needs be assisted by the most modern thinking in the world if he is to forge anew the link between the live present and the great legacy of the past.

Efforts of Islamic Reform

It is undeniable that we must acknowledge the worthy western achievements in Islamic and Oriental studies. These have prepared the road for Muslims as well as Orientals to enter these fields of research with greater promise than was open to their western colleagues. The Muslims and Orientals are naturally closer to the spirit of Islam and the Orient which they are seeking to penetrate. As long as the new leadership in this field has come from the West, it is the Muslim's and Oriental's duty to look into the products of the West, to correct their mistakes, and to give to the discipline the proper orientation which will re-establish the unity of the old and the new. This should not be done merely on paper, for it is a living legacy, spiritual and mental, which the heirs ought to represent to themselves, to add thereto, and to illumine with their own vision and understanding of the central realities.

Many of our young men have succeeded in their undertaking of scientific researches on these lines. The orientalists have often appreciated their work and complimented them on their contributions to scholarship.

Western Missionaries and Muslim Conservatives

Scientific cooperation in Islamics between Muslim and Oriental scholars on one hand, and western scholars on the others, is worthy of great promise. Although it has just begun to make progress, we yet notice that the Christian missionaries continue their attacks against Islam and Muhammad (P.B.U.H) with the same ferocity as their predecessors to whom we have alluded earlier. In this they are encouraged and supported by the western colonialist powers in the name of freedom of opinion. These very missionaries were themselves thrown out of their

countries by their own governments because they were not trusted by them to implant true faith in the hearts of their own co-religionists at home. Moreover this colonialism assists the leaders of conservatism among the Muslims. Colonialism in fact has brought about a coalescence of the two tendencies: on the one hand it confirms the infusion of Islam with that which is not Islamic, such as the irrational and unrefined superstitions added to the life of the Prophet (P.B.U.H); on the other hand, it confirms the antagonists of Islam in their attacks against these forgeries.

The Idea and Plan of This Book

The circumstances of my life have enabled me to observe all these maneuvers in the various countries of the Islamic East, indeed throughout the Muslim World, and to discover their final purpose. The objective of colonialism is to destroy in these countries the freedom of opinion, the freedom to seek the truth. I have come to feel that I stand under the duty to foil these maneuvers and spoil their purpose, for they are certainly harmful to the whole of mankind, not only to Islam and the Orient. What greater damage could befall humanity than to have its greater half, the half which has throughout history been the carrier of civilization, to wallow in sterility and conservatism? It was this consideration which led me at the end of the road of life to the study of the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), the carrier of the message of Islam and the target of Christian attacks on one side and of Muslim conservatives on the other. But I have resolved that this will be a scientific study, developed on the western modern method, and written for the sake of truth alone.

I began to study the history of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and to look more closely into the *Sirah* of Ibn Hishām, the *Tabaqat* of Ibn Sa'd, the *Maghazi* of Waqidi, and *the Spirit of Islam* of

Sayyid Ameer Ali. Then I took care to study what some orientalists have written on the subject such as the work of Dermenghem, and also that of Washington Irving. The winter of 1932 at Luxor provided me with the occasion to begin my writing. At that time I was quite hesitant to publish my thoughts because I feared the storm which the conservatives and their followers who believe in superstitions might raise. But I was encouraged by a number of professors in the Islamic institutions of learning, many of whom took such care in studying my writing and making pertinent observations on it that I resolved to follow my scientific treatment of the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to a conclusion. It was the encouragement of these men that stirred me to search for the best means by which to analyze the biography of the Prophet (P.B.U.H).

The Qur'ān as the Most Reliable Source

I discovered that the most reliable source of information for the biography of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is the Holy Qur'ān. It contains a reference to every event in the life of the Arab Prophet (P.B.U.H) which can serve the investigator as a standard norm and as a guiding light in his analysis of the reports of the various biographies and of the *Sunnah.* As I sought to understand all the Qur'ānic references to the life of the Prophet (P.B.U.H), Professor Ahmad Lutfi al Sayyid, of Dar al Kutub al Misriyyah, offered me great assistance by letting me use a topically arranged collection of all the verses of the Qur'ān. While analyzing these verses, I began to realize that it was necessary to discover the causes and occasions of their Revelation. I acknowledge that despite all the effort I put in that direction I was not always successful. The books of exegesis sometimes refer to these relations but often overlook them. Al Wāhidi's *Asbāb* al *Nuzul,* and Ibn Salāmah's *al Nāsikh Wa al Mansūkh* treat this matter

very precisely but, unfortunately, very briefly. In these as well as other books of exegesis, I discovered many facts which helped me in my analysis of the claims various biographies have made as well as the many other facts worthy of being considered and investigated by all scholars of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah.*

Candid Advice

As my research progressed I found candid advice coming to me from all directions, especially from the professors of Islam and the learned men of religion. Dar al Kutub al Misriyyah and its officers were responsible for the greatest assistance. No expression of appreciation of their work is adequate. Suffice it here to mention that, encouraged by his director and other senior officers, Professor 'Abd al Rahim Mahmūd, Editor in the Division of Literature, used often to save me from great trouble by borrowing for me all the needed books. Whenever I did manage to go to Dār al Kutub, all the employees were delightfully ready to assist me in my search. Some of these men were personally known to me and others were not. I referred many a question which was opaque or presented difficulties to those of my friends whom I knew would shed some light thereon; and more often than not the confusion or opaqueness was cleared. This was many times the case with the Grand Shaykh Mohammad Mustafā al Maraghi, along with my expert friend, Ja'far Pasha Waliy, who lent me several of his books, such as the *Sahih of Muslim* and the histories of Makkah, and who guided me in many problems. Makram 'Ubayd Pasha, another friend of mine, lent me Sir William Muir's *The life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H)* and Father Lammens's *Islam.* This valuable assistance is all in addition to that which I found in the writings of the contemporary authors such as *Fajr al Islam* by Ahmad Amin, *Qisas at Anbiyā'* by 'Abd al Wahhāb al Najjar, *Fi*

al Adab alt Jāhili by Taha Husayn, *The Jews in Arabia* by Israel Wolfenson, and many other contemporary works mentioned in my list of old and new references used in the preparation of this book.

As I progressed in my research more and more complicated problems emerged which overtaxed my powers. Throughout, the biographies of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and the books of exegeses as well as the works of the orientalists have assisted me in achieving a measure of certainty of purpose. I found myself compelled to limit my investigation to the events in the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and to refrain from tackling a number of side issues connected therewith. Had I allowed myself to indulge in the discussion of all these problems, I would have needed to write many volumes of this size or larger. Let me mention in passing that Caussin de Perceval wrote three volumes under the title *Study in Arab History,* of which he devoted the first two to the history and life of the Arab tribes and the third to the history of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his first two successors, Abu Bakr and 'Umar. Likewise, the *Tabaqat of Ibn Sa'd* devoted one of its many volumes to the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and all the others to the lives of his companions. My purpose in this work has never gone beyond the investigation of the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) itself; therefore, I did not allow myself the liberty to investigate the other problems involved.

Restriction to the Life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H)

Another consideration restricted me to the frontiers of the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) the greatness, majesty, and brilliance which make his life unique among all others. How great was Abū Bakr! And how great was 'Umar! Each was a great sun eclipsing all others around him. How great, too, were the first

Muslims, the companions of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), who are remembered from generation to generation with the greatest pride. All these men, however, stood beneath Muhammad (P.B.U.H), reflecting his light and his glory. It is not easy therefore for the investigator to restrict himself to the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) alone. This is all the more so if the investigation is to follow the modern scientific method, and thereby present the greatness of that life with all its strength and moving appeal in a manner which both Muslims and non-Muslims may accept and admire.

If we were to disregard those foolish fanatics, such as the missionaries and their like, whose purpose never goes beyond vituperation of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), we could still find a clear and distinct respect for greatness in the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in the works of the western orientalists. In his *On Heroes and Hero Worship,* Thomas Carlyle devoted a chapter to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in which he described the Revelation of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as issuing from a spark that is Divine and Holy. He understood Muhammad's greatness and portrayed it in its whole strength. Likewise, Muir, Irving, Sprengër, and Weil, among other orientalists, eloquently described the greatness of Muhammad (P.B.U.H). A lack of vision, penetration, and critical skill prevented some of them from regarding one point or another of Muhammad's life (P.B.U.H) as other than blameworthy. It is probable that they had relied in their investigation on unreliable biographies and books of exegesis of the Prophet (P.B.U.H), forgetting that the earliest biography was not written down until two centuries after Muhammad's death (P.B.U.H), and that during this time a great number of Israelitisms and other forgeries were forced into his biography and into his teachings. Generally, western orientalists acknowledge this fact even though they attribute to the Prophet materials (P.B.U.H) which the least investigation would reject as superfluous. The cases of the goddesses of Makkah, of Zayd and Zaynab, of the wives of

the Prophet (P.B.U.H), constitute examples of such superfluous materials as I have had the occasion to investigate in this book.

This Book as Mere Beginning of Research

No one should think that research in the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is completed with this work. It is closer to the truth for me to say that my work is really only the beginning of scientific research in this field in Arabic and that all my efforts in this regard do not make my work any more than a mere beginning in the scientific as well as Islamic undertaking of this grave subject. As many scholars have devoted all their energies to the study of one period of history, even as Aulard has specialized in the study of the French Revolution, some scholars and historians ought to devote themselves to the study of the Age of Muhammad (P.B.U.H). The life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is certainly worthy of being studied in a scientific and academic manner by more than one specialist or by more than one competent scholar. I have no doubt that any efforts spent on such scientific study of this brief period in the history of Arabia and on investigating the relations of Arabia to other countries during that age will prove beneficial to mankind as a whole, not merely to Islām or the Muslims. Such a study will clear many psychological and spiritual problems and prepare them for scholarly research. It will shed great light on the social moral and legislative life of Arabia and thus illuminate areas which so far science has been unable to penetrate on account of the religious conflict between Islam and Christianity. Such a study would dissipate the futile attempt at westernizing the Orientals or Christianizing the Muslims in a way that history has proven to be impossible and harmful to the relations of the various parts of mankind with one another.

Universal Benefits of the Study

Indeed, I would even go further. I would assert that such, a study may show the road to mankind as a whole to the new civilization to which it is currently groping. If western Christendom is too proud to find the new light in Islam and in its Prophet (P.B.U.H) but willingly accepts it from Indian theosophy and other religions of the Far East, then it devolves upon the Orientals themselves, Muslims, Jews or Christians, to undertake this study in all objectivity and fairness in order to reach and establish the truth. Islamic thought rests on a methodology that is scientific and modern as regards all that relates man to nature. In this respecl it is perfectly realistic. But it becomes personalist the moment it leaves nature to consider the relationship of man to the cosmos as a whole and to his creator. Moreover, in the psychological and spiritual fields Islamic thought made contributions which science has not yet been able either to confirm or to deny. Although science may not regard these discoveries as facts in the scientific sense of the terms, they still remain the constituents of man's happiness and the determinants of his conduct in the world. What then is life? And what is man's relation to this world? How shall we explain his concern for life? What is the common faith which inspires human groups and by which their morale is raised to high pitch or dissolved? What is being? And what is the unity of being? What is the place of man in this being and in its unity? These are problems of metaphysics and a whole literature has arisen around them. Answers far nearer human understanding and implementation than are usually found in the literature of metaphysics are found in the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his teachings. Ever since the 'Abbāsi period, Muslim thinkers have spent centuries looking for metaphysical answers.

Likewise western thinkers have spent three centuries, from the sixteenth through the nineteenth, to lead the West to modern

science in the same manner as the Muslims have done in the past. Once more, science stands today as it stood in the past as failing to realize human happiness on earth. Such happiness is impossible to realize unless we resume research for a correct understanding of the personal relationship of man to the cosmos and to the creator of the cosmos, and unless such understanding is sought on the basis of a Divine unity, which is eternal and immutable, and with regard to space and time in relation to our short life. The life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) provides us with the best example of personalist communion with being as well as the best materials for a scientific study of this relationship. The same materialr may equally be the object of practical study for those who are endowed therefore but naturally removed from achieving such communion with Allah as the Prophet (P.B.U.H) had achieved. It is most likely that the scientific study, and the practical study, if felicitously undertaken, may yet shake our world loose from the paganism into which it has fallen in spite of its religious creeds and scientific doctrines. It may yet save the world from its present monolatry of wealth that has made all science, art, and ethics its servants and conscripted all man's powers to do its bidding and sing its praises. Such hopes may still be far from realization. However, the beginning of the end of this all-embracing paganism of modern times is clearly distinguishable under close observance of the current flow of events. Perhaps, these humble beginnings will grow and become surer of themselves when scholarship has found answers to these spiritual problems through the study of the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), of his teachings, of his age, and of the spiritual world revolution which he incepted. Should such scientific and scholarly research uncover for man his stronger bonds with the higher reality of the world, it would have then provided the new civilization with its first foundation.

As I said already, this book is only a mere beginning on this road. It will prove sufficient reward for me if it should succeed

in convincing the reader of the validity of its assertions, and the scholars and researchers of the need for dedication and specialization if the final end of the study is to be reached. Allah will surely reward the good doers.

The speed with which the first edition of this work was exhausted has exceeded all expectations. Ten thousand copies were printed of which one-third were sold before the book came off the press. The remaining copies were sold during the first three months following its publication. If this is any indication, the reader must have been quite interested in its contents. A second printing, therefore, is as imperative as the reconsideration of those contents.

An Observation

Without a doubt, the title of the book attracted the reader most. The attraction may also have been due to the method with which the subject was treated. Whatever the reason, the thought of a second edition has occasioned the question of whether or not I should allow the book to be reprinted without change or have it corrected, considering that a need for correction, clarification, or addition has in the meantime seemed to me evident. Some, whose counsel I certainly value, have advised me to make the second edition an exact copy of the first in order to achieve equality between the earlier and later buyers and to allow myself longer time for revision thereafter. This view almost convinced me. Had I followed it, this second edition would have been put in the hands of the readers many months ago. But I hesitated to accept this advice and finally decided in favor of revisions which many considerations had made necessary. The first of such considerations concerned a number of observations which Mohammad Mustafā al Maraghi, Grand Shaykh of al Azhar, had

kindly made when he read the first parts of the book as they came from the press, and kindly decided to write the foreword. When the book made its appearance, a number of *'ulamā'* and other scholars spoke and wrote about it. Their observations were all preceded by numerous compliments for the achievement of this work, indeed more than the book actually deserved. These observations were based upon the understanding that a book about the Arab Prophet (P.B.U.H), which is so well written that it has won their approval and appreciation, ought to be absolutely free of all shortcomings. It is therefore necessary for me to take them into account and give them the consideration due.

It was perhaps this very approval and appreciation of the readers which moved them to make observations on incidental matters related neither to the essence of the book nor to its main themes. Some of them, for instance, pleaded for further clarification of certain points. Others called for closer scrutiny of my use of prepositions. Still others suggested different words better to express the meanings I intended. A number of them did focus on the themes of the book and therefore caused me to review what I have written. I certainly wish that this second edition will come closer to satisfying all these writers and scholars. All this notwithstanding, I still believe that this book provides no more than a mere beginning in the Arabic language of such studies using the modern scientific method.

A further consideration caused me to review the first edition. Having read the many observations made, most of which were not new, I became convinced as I read my work again that I ought to add, where relevant, a discussion of the points to which the observations referred in order at least to convince their authors of my point of view and of the veracity of my arguments. My reconsideration of some of these points opened new vistas which any student of the biography of the Arab Prophet (P.B.U.H) will have to study. Although I am proud that the first

edition did in fact deal with the points raised in the reviews, I am more proud yet today to present to the reader this second edition in which the same points have been treated more fully. No study, however, can be full or perfect which undertakes the investigation of the life of the greatest man history has known—the Seal of the Prophets and of the Messengers from on high (P.B.U.H)

In this edition, I have tried to address myself to a number of observations made regarding my method of investigation. I have added to the book two new chapters in which I have dealt with matters which have been only slightly referred to toward the end of the preface of the first edition. I have also re-edited the work wherever it needed editing, and added to its various sections and paragraphs such points as my rethinking has made necessary.

Answering the Followers of Western Orientalists

I want first to address myself to a letter I received from an Egyptian writer. He claimed that his letter is an Arabic translation of an article he wrote for a German Orientalist magazine in criticism of this book. I have not published this letter in the Arabic press because it contains many unfounded attacks; and I thought that its author had better bear the responsibility of publishing it if he wished to. Nor will I mention his name here because I believe he will repudiate his old views when he reads the critical analysis that follows. The substance of the letter is that my ***The Life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H)*** is not a scientific one in the modern sense. He argues that I have depended upon Arabic sources alone and have not consulted the studies of German onentalists such as Weil, Goldziher, Noldeke, and others, and have not adopted their conclusions. The letter also blames me for regarding the Qur'ān as a certain historical document, whereas the investigations of the foregoing orientalists have proven that it has been tampered with and been

changed after the death of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in the first century A.H. It reported that these investigations have discovered that the name of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) is a case in point; that having once been "Qutham" or "Quthamah," it was later changed to "Muhammad" in order to accord with the verse,

﴿ وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ٱبْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَـٰبَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ إِنِّى رَسُولُ ٱللَّهِ إِلَيْكُم مُّصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَىَّ مِنَ ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةِ وَمُبَشِّرًۢا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِى مِنۢ بَعْدِى ٱسْمُهُۥٓ أَحْمَدُ ﴾ سورة الصف آية ٦

And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "O Children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Tawrah (which came) before me, and giving Glad Tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad." (As-Saff :6)

This fabrication was deemed desirable in order to forge a link between the Prophet and the Evangel's announcement of a prophet coming after Jesus. Moreover, the letter added, the researches of the onientalists have revealed that the Prophet (P.B.U.H) suffered from epilepsy, that his socalled revelations were really effects of his epileptic attacks; that the symptoms of epilepsy—loss of consciousness, perspiration, convulsion, foam around the mouth—were all apparent in his case. It was after he recovered from these fits that he claimed that the Revelation had come to him, recited it to the believers, and claimed that it had come from Allah.

By itself, this letter is not worthy of attention or investigation. Its author, however, is a Muslim and an Egyptian. Had he been an orientalist or a missionary, I would have let him alone to rave as he pleased. What I have said in the preface to the

first edition in this regard is sufficient refutation for such people and views. The author of this letter, however, is an example of a class of young Muslims who are too ready to accept what the orientalists say and regard it as true knowledge. It is precisely to this class of people that I want now to address myself and warn them of the errors in which the onientalists fall. Some of these orientalists are candid and scholarly despite their errors. Error nonetheless finds its way into their conclusions either because of their lack of mastery of the nuances of the Arabic language, or of their prejudice against religion as such, or Islam in particular, which, in turn, conditions them to seek to destroy the fundamental basis of religion. Both shortcomings are unworthy of scholars and it behooves them to seek a remedy therefor. We have seen Christian thinkers who, moved by this same antagonism, denied that Jesus ever existed in history; and we have seen others who have gone further and have even written about the madness of Jesus. The western thinker's innate antagonism to religion was generated by the struggle between the Church and the state and this led both the men of science and the men of religion to pull in different directions in order to wrench power from the other side and seize it for themselves. Islam, on the other hand, is free of such strife; Muslim scholars, therefore, should not be affected by it as their western colleagues have been. In most cases, to fall under such a complexus would vitiate the research. Muslim readers therefore, should watch out more carefully when they read a religious study by a westerner. They should scrutinize every claim these studies make for the truth. A large measure of their researches are deeply affected by this past strife which the men of religion and the men of science had waged against one another during long centuries.

Dependence upon the Muslim Biographers

The case of the letter from the Egyptian Muslim colleague clearly points to the need for such care. His first criticism concerned my dependence upon Arabic and Islamic sources. Of course this is not denied. But I have also consulted the books of the orientalists mentioned in my list of references. The Arabic sources, however, constituted my primary sources as they constituted the primary sources for orientalists before me. That is natural. For these sources and the Qur'ān above all, were the first ones ever to discuss the life of the Arab Prophet (P.B.U.H). There is nothing objectionable if such early historical documents are taken as primary sources for any modern and scientific biographical study of the Prophet (P.B.U.H). Nöldeke, Goldziher, Weil, Sprenger, Muir, and other orientalists have all taken the same works as primary sources for their studies, just as I have done. I have also allowed myself as much liberty in scrutinizing the reports of these works as they did. And I have also not omitted to consult some of the early Christian books which the orientalists had consulted despite the fact that they were products of Christian fanaticism rather than of scholarly research and criticism. If anybody were to criticize my work on the grounds that I have allowed myself to differ from some orientalists and have arrived at conclusions other than their own, he would in fact be calling for intellectual stagnation—a conservatism not less reactionary or retrogressive than any other conservatism we have known. It is unlikely that any of the orientalists themselves agree with such call; for to do so implies approval of religious stagnation. Neither for me nor for any scholarly student of history is such a stand viable. Rather, I should ask myself, as well as any other scholar, to scutinize the work of his colleagues. Unless he is convinced by clear evidence and incontestable proofs, he should seek other ways to the truth. To this task I call those of us, particularly the youth, who admire

the researches of the Orientalists. This has also been my task. Mine is the reward where I have in fact arrived at the truth; and mine is the apology where I have erred despite my good intentions.

The Orientalists and the Bases of Religion

The aforesaid Muslim Egyptian's letter gives evidence of the western orientalists' extreme care to destroy the basis of religion. They claim that their researches have established that the Qur'ān is not a historical document devoid of doubt but that it has been tampered with and edited, and many verses added to it for religious or political ulterior purposes in the first century after the death of the Prophet of Islam (PB.U.H). I am not questioning the author of the letter from an Islamic point of view but arguing with him, as it were, as a fellow Muslim, the veracity or otherwise of the Islamic conviction that the Qur'än is the work of Allah and that it is impossible for it to be forged. The stand from which he wrote his letter is clearly that of the orientalists who hold that the Qur' an is a book written by Muhammad. According to a number of orientalists, Muhammad wrote the Qur'ān in the belief that it was Allah's Revelation to him; according to others, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) claimed that the Qur'ān was the Revelation of Allah merely in order to prove the genuineness of his message. Let me then address the author of this letter in his own language assuming that he is one of those free thinkers who refuse to be convinced except by scientific, apodeictic proof.

The False Charge of Forgery

Our young author depends upon the western orientalists and their views. A number of these do think of the Qur'ān in the manner this young author exemplified. Their claim is based upon

flagrant motives which stand at the farthest possible remove from science and the scientific method. Suffice it to expose the incoherence of their arguments that the phrase, "and announcing the advent of a prophet (P.B.U.H) after me whose name shall be Ahmad" was added to the Qur'ān after the death of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) in order to establish proof of Muhammad's prophethood based upon the scriptures preceding the Qur'ān. Had these orientalists who make this claim truly sought to serve the purpose of science, they would not have recoursed to this cheap propaganda that the Torah and the Evangel are truly revealed books. Had they honored science for its own sake, they would have treated the Qur'ān on a par with the scriptures antecedent to it. Either they would have regarded the Qur'ān as sacred as these scriptures—in which case it would have been natural for it to refer to its antecedents—or, they would have regarded all these books as they did the Qur'ān and imputed to them the same kind of doubtful nature as they did to it, holding as well their authors to have forged or written them in satisfaction of ulterior religious or political purposes. Had the orientalists held such a view, logic would rule out their claim that the Qur'ān had been tampered with and forged for political and religious purposes. It is inadmissible that the Muslims would have sought such confirmation of Muhammad's claim to prophethood from these scriptures after Muslim dominion had been established, the Christian empire vanquished, so many other peoples of the earth subjugated and, indeed, after the Christians themselves had entered into Islam *en masse.* The inadmissibility of these orientalists' claims is demanded by genuine scientific thought. Furthermore, the claim that the Torah and the Evangel are sacred whereas the Qur'ān is not is devoid of scientific support. Therefore, the claim that the Qur'ān had been tampered with and forged in order to seek confirmation of Muhammad's prophethood on the basis of the Torah and the Evangel is a piece of sheer nonsense unacceptable to either logic or history.

Those western orientalists who have made this false claim are very few and belong to the more fanatic group. The majority of them do believe that the Qur'ān which is in our hands today is precisely the Qur'ān which Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had recited to the Muslims during his lifetime; that it has neither been tampered with nor forged. They admit this explicitly in their writings while criticizing the method by which the verses of the Qur'ān were collected and its chapters arranged—a matter of discussion which does not belong here. The Muslim students of the Qur'ān did in fact study these criticisms and exposed their errors. As for our purpose here, suffice it to look at some orientalists' writing on this subject. Perhaps our young Muslim Egyptian author would thereby be convinced and, perhaps, he would convince those of his fellows who think like him.

Muir Rejects the Forgery of the Qur'an

The orientalists have written a great deal on this subject. We can select a passage by Sir William Muir from his book, ***The Life of Mahomet,*** in the hope that those who claim that the Qur'ān has been forged will realize wherein they have erred, to the detriment of both the truth and their own scholarship. It should be remembered that our author, Muir, is a Christian, an *engage* and proud Christian, as well as a missionary who never misses occasion to criticize the Prophet of Islam (P.B.U.H) or its scripture.

When he came to speak of the Qur'ān and the veracity and precision of its text, he wrote:

"The Divine Revelation was the corner-stone of Islam. The recital of a passage from it formed an essential part of daily prayer public and private; and its perusal and repetition were enforced as a duty and a privilege fraught with religious merit. This is the universal voice of early tradition, and may be

gathered also from the Revelation itself. The Coran was accordingly committed to memory more or less by every adherent of Islam, and the extent to which it could be recited was one of the chief distinctions of nobility in the early Moslem empire. The custom of Arabia favoured the task. Passionately fond of poetry, yet possessed of but limited means and skill in committing to writing the effusions of their bards, the Arabs had long been habituated to imprint these, as well as the tradition of genealogical and other tribal events, on the living tablets of their hearts. The recollective faculty was thus cultivated to the highest pitch; and it was applied, with all the ardour of an awakened spirit, to the Coran. Such was the tenacity of their memory, and so great their power of application, that several of Mahomet's followers, according to early tradition, could, during his life-time, repeat with scrupulous accuracy the entire Revelation.

....

"However retentive the Arab memory, we should still have regarded with distrust a transcript made entirely from that source. But there is good reason for believing that many fragmentary copies, embracing amongst them the whole. Coran, or nearly the whole, were made by Mahomet's followers during his life. Writing was without doubt generally known at Mecca long before Mahomet assumed the prophetical office. Many of his followers are expressly mentioned as employed by the Prophet (P.B.U.H) at Medina in writing his letters or despatches . . . Some of the poorer Meccan captives taken at Badr were offered their release on condition that they would teach a certain number of the ignorant citizens of Medina to write. And although the people of Medina were not so generally educated as those of Mecca, yet many are distinctly noticed as having been able to write before Islam. The ability thus existing, it may be safely inferred that the verses which were so indefatigably committed to memory, would be likewise committed carefully to writing.

"We also know that when a tribe first joined Islam, Mahomet was in the habit of deputing one or more of his followers to teach them the Coran and the requirements of the faith. We are frequently informed that they carried written instructions with them on the latter point, and they would naturally provide themselves also with transcripts of the more important parts of the Revelation, especially those upon which the ceremonies of Islam were founded, and such as were usually recited at the public prayers. Besides the reference in the Coran to its own existence in a written form, we have express mention made in the authentic traditions of Omar' s conversion, of a copy of the 20th Sura being used by his sister's family for social and private devotional reading. This refers to a period preceding, by three or four years, the emigration to Medina. If transcripts of the Revelations were made, and in common use, at that early time when the followers of Islam were few and oppressed, it is certain that they must have multiplied exceedingly when the Prophet (P.B.U.H) came to power, and his Book formed the law of the greater part of Arabia.

"Such was the condition of the text of the Coran during Mahomet's life-time (P.B.U.H), and such it remained for about a year after his death (P.B.U.H), imprinted upon the hearts of his people, and fragmentary transcripts increasing daily.. The two sources would correspond closely with each other; for the Coran, even while the Prophet (P.B.U.H) was yet alive, was regarded with a superstitious awe as containing the very words of Allah; so that any variations would be reconciled by a direct reference to Mahomet himself (P.B.U.H), and after his death (P.B.U.H) to the originals where they existed, or copies from the same, and to the memory of the Prophet's confidential friends and amanuenses.

"It was not till the overthrow of Moseilama, when a great carnage took place amongst the Moslems at Yemama, and large

numbers of the best reciters of the Coran were slain, that a misgiving arose in Omar's mind as to the uncertainty which would be experienced regarding the text, when all those who had received it from the original source, and thence stored it in their memories, should have passed away. 'I fear,' said he, addressing the Caliph Abū Bakr, 'that slaughter may again wax hot amongst the reciters of the Coran, in other fields of battle; and that much may be lost therefrom. Now, therefore, my advice is, that thou shouldest give speedy orders for the collection of the Coran.' Abū Bakr agreed, and thus made known his wishes to Zeid ibn Thabit, a citizen of Medina, and the Prophet's chief amanuensis: 'Thou art a young man, and wise; against whom no one amongst us can cast an imputation; and thou wert wont to write down the inspired Revelations of the Prophet(P.B.U.H) of the Lord. Wherefore now search out the Coran, and bring it together.' So new and unexpected was the enterprise that Zeid at first shrank from it, and doubted the propriety, or even lawfulness, of attempting that which Mahomet (P.B.U.H) had neither himself done nor commanded to be done. At last he yielded to the joint entreaties of Abū Bakr and Omar, and seeking out the fragments of the Coran from every quarter, 'gathered it together, from dateleaves, and tablets of white stone, and from the breasts of men.' By the labours of Zeid, these scattered and confused materials were reduced to the order and sequence in which we now find them, and in which it is said that Zeid used to repeat the Coran in the presence of Mahomet (P.B.U.H). The original copy prepared by Zeid was probably kept by Abū Bakr during the short remainder of his reign. It then came into the possession of Omar who . . . committed it to the custody of his daughter Haphsa, the Prophet's widow. The compilation of Zeid, as embodied in this exemplar, continued during Omar's ten years' Caliphate to be the standard and authoritative text.

"But variety of expression either prevailed in the previous transcripts and modes of recitation, or soon crept into the copies

which were made from Zeid's edition. Mussulmans were scandalised. The Coran sent down from heaven was ONE, but where was now its unity? Hodzeifa, who had warred both in Armenia and Adzerbaijan and had observed the different readings of the Syrians and of the men of Irac, alarmed at the number and extent of the variations, warned Othman to interpose, and 'stop the people, before they should differ regarding their Scripture, as did the Jews and Christians.' The Caliph was persuaded, and to remedy the evil had recourse again to Zeid, with whom he associated a syndicate of three Coreish. The original copy of the first edition was obtained from Haphsa's depository, the various readings were sought out from the different provinces, and a careful recension of the whole set on foot. In case of difference between Zeid and his coadjutors, the voice of the latter, as conclusive of the Coreishite idiom, was to Preponderate; and the new collation was thus assimilated exclusively to the Meccan dialect, in which the Prophet (P.B.U.H) had given utterance to his inspiration. Transcripts were multiplied and forwarded to the chief cities in the empire, and the previously existing copies were all, by the Caliph's command, committed to the flames. The old original was returned to Haphsa's custody.

"The recession of Othman had been handed down to us unaltered. So carefully, indeed, has it been preserved, that there are no variations of importance—we might almost say no variations at all—among the innumerable copies of the Coran scattered throughout the vast bounds of the empire of Islam. Contending and embittered factions, taking their rise in the murder of Othman himself within a quarter of a century from the death of Mahomet (P.B.U.H), have ever since rent the Mahometan world. Yet but ONE CORAN has been current amongst them; and the consentaneous use by them all in every age up to the present day of the same Scripture, is an irrefragable proof that we have now before us the very text prepared by

command of the unfortunate Caliph. There is probably in the world no other work which has remained twelve centuries with so pure a text. The various readings are wonderfully few in number, and are chiefly confined to differences in the vowel points and diacritical signs. But these marks were invented at a later date. They did not exist at all in the early copies, and can hardly be said to affect the text of Othman.

"Since, then, we possess the undoubted text of Othman's recension, it remains to be enquired whether that text was an honest reproduction of Abū Bakr's edition, with the simple reconcilement of unimportant variations. There is the fullest ground for believing that it was so. No early or trustworthy traditions throw suspicion upon Othman of tampering with the Coran in order to support his own claims. The Sheeahs of later times, indeed, pretend that Othman left out certain Suras or passages which favoured Ali. But this is incredible. .

"When Othman's edition was prepared, no open breach had taken place between the Omeyads and the Alyites. The unity of Islam was still complete and unthreatened. Ali's pretensions were as yet undeveloped. No sufficient object can, therefore, be assigned for the perpetration by Othman of an offence which Moslems regard as one of the blackest dye . . . At the time of the recension, there were still multitudes alive who had the Coran, as originally delivered, by heart; and of the supposed passages favouring Ali-had any ever existed—there would have been numerous transcripts in the hands of his family and followers. Both of these sources must have proved an effectual check upon any attempt at suppression. Fourth: The party of Ali shortly after assumed an independent attitude, and he himself succeeded to the Caliphate. Is it conceivable that either Ali, or his party, when thus arrived at power, would have tolerated a mutilated Coran—mutilated expressly to destroy his claims? Yet we find that they used the same Coran as their opponents, and raised no shadow of an objection against it. The insurgents are indeed said to have

made it one of their complaints against Othman that he had caused a new edition to be made, and had committed the old copies of the sacred volume to the flames; but these proceedings were objected to simply as unauthorised and sacrilegious. No hint was dropped of alteration or omission. Such a supposition, palpably absurd at the time, is altogether an after-thought of the modern Sheeas.

"We may then safely conclude that Othman's recension was, what it professed to be, namely, the reproduction of Abū Bakr's edition, with a more perfect conformity to the dialect of Mecca, and possibly a more uniform arrangement of the component parts-but still a faithful reproduction. The most important question yet remains, viz., whether Abū Bakr's edition was itself an authentic and complete collection of Mahomet's Revelations (P.B.U.H). The following considerations warrant the belief that it was authentic and in the main as complete as at the time was possible.

"First.-We have no reason to doubt that Abū Bakr was a sincere follower of Mahomet (P.B.U.H), and an earnest believer in the Divine origin of the Coran. His faithful attachment to the Prophet's person (P.B.U.H), conspicuous for the last twenty years of his life, and his simple, consistent, and unambitious deportment as Caliph, admit no other supposition. Firmly believing the revelations of his friend to be the Revelations of Allah himself, his first object would be to secure a pure and complete transcript of them. A similar argument applies with almost equal force to Omar and the other agents in the revision. The great masses of Mussulmans were undoubtedly sincere in their belief. From the scribes themselves, employed in the compilation, down to the humblest Believer who brought his little store of writing on stones or palm-leaves, all would be influenced by the same earnest desire to reproduce the very words which their Prophet (P.B.U.H) had declared as his message from the Lord. And a similar guarantee existed in the feelings of the people at large, in

whose soul no principle was, more deeply rooted than an awful reverence for the supposed word of Allah. The Koran itself contains frequent denunciations against those who should presume to 'fabricate anything in the name of the Lord;' or conceal any part of that which He had revealed. Such an action, represented as the very worst description of crime, we cannot believe that the first Moslems, in the early ardour of their faith and love, would have dared to contemplate.

"Second.-The compilation was made within two years of Mahomet's death (P.B.U.H). We have seen that several of his followers had the entire Revelation . . . by heart; that every Moslem treasured up more or less some portions in his memory; and that there were official Reciters of it, for public worship and tuition, in all countries to which Islam extended. These formed a living link between the Revelation fresh from Mahomet's lips (P.B.U.H), and the edition of it by Zeid. Thus the people were not only sincere and fervent in wishing for a faithful copy of the Koran: they were also in possession of ample means for realising their desire, and for testing the accuracy and completeness, of the volume placed in their hands by Abū Bakr.

"Third.—A still greater security would be obtained from the fragmentary transcripts which existed in Mahomet's life-time (P.B.U.H), and which must have greatly multiplied before the Koran was compiled. These were in the possession, probably, of all who could read. And as we know that the compilation of Abū Bakr came into immediate and unquestioned use, it is reasonable to conclude that it embraced and corresponded with every extant fragment; and therefore, by common consent, superseded them. We hear of no fragments, sentences, or word intentionally omitted by the compilers, nor of any that differed from the received edition. Had any such been discoverable, they would undoubtedly have been preserved and noticed in those traditional repositories which treasured up the minutest and most trivial acts and sayings of the Prophet (P.B.U.H).

"Fourth.-The contents and the arrangement of the Koran speak forcibly for its authenticity. All the fragments that could be obtained have, with artless simplicity, been joined together. The patchwork bears no marks of a designing genius or moulding hand. It testifies to the faith and reverence of the compilers, and proves that they dared no more than simply collect the sacred fragments and place them in juxtaposition.

"The conclusion, which we may now with confidence draw, is that the editions of Abū Bakr and of Othman were not only faithful, but, so far as the materials went, complete; and that whatever omissions there may have been, were not on the part of the compilers intentional . . . we may upon the strongest presumption affirm that every verse in the Koran is the genuine and unaltered composition of Mahomet himself. (P.B.U.H)"

The Slanderers of Islam

We have quoted Sir William Muir at length. Hence, we do not need to bring further quotations from the work of Father Lammens, Von Hammer, and other orientalists who hold this view. All these are absolutely certain that the Qur'ān which we recite today contains all that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) reported in all candidness as having been revealed to him from his Lord. If a certain group of orientalists do not agree and insist that the Qur'ān is forged without regard to these rational proofs which Muir had listed and which most orientalists had in fact taken from Muslim historians and scholars, it is in order to slander Islam and its Prophet (P.B.U.H). Such is the dictate of hate and resentment. However clever and adept such orientalists may be in formulating their slander, they will never be able to pass it as genuine scientific research; nor will they ever be able to fool any Muslims, except perhaps those young men deluded enough to think that free research demands of them the denial of their

tradition and the naive acceptance of any nicely presented falsehood and attacks against their legacy, regardless of the validity or falsity of its premises and assumptions.

We could have quoted these same arguments of Sir William Muir and other orientalists directly from their primary Muslim sources as written by the scholars of Islam. But we have preferred to quote them in the words of an orientalist in order to show those of our youths who are spellbound by western, works that precision in scientific research and a candid desire to seek the truth are sufficient to lead anyone to the ultimate facts of history. It was also our intention to show that the investigator ought to be very exact and precise in his investigation if he is to arrive at an understanding of his objective unaffected by ulterior motives or prejudice. Some orientalists undoubtedly arrive at the truth in some cases; others have not been as fortunate. The research which we have conducted in the writing of this book has convinced us that as regards the problem which the life of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) poses to the scholar most of the orientalists have indeed erred.

Proper Methodology

It behooves us here to remember that the researcher should never assert or deny a thesis until his research and analysis have led him to perfect conviction that he has actually grasped all there is to know concerning the given problem. Here, the historian stands in the same predicament as his colleague researcher in the natural sciences. Such is his duty regardless of whether the material he analyzes is the work of an orientalist or that of a Muslim scholar. If we sincerely seek the truth, our duty is to scrutinize critically all that the Arab and the Muslim scholars have written in the fields of medicine, astronomy, chemistry and other sciences, and to reject all that does not hold

its ground before the tribunal of science and to confirm that which does. The search for truth imposes upon us such exactitude in historical matters even though they may be related to the life of the Prophet (P.B.U.H). The historian is not a mere reporter. He is also a critic of what he reports, analyzing it and ascertaining the truth that it contains. There is no criticism without analytic scrutiny; and science and knowledge constitute the foundation of such criticism and analysis.

The exacting analysis which we have quoted in the foregoing pages regarding the Qur'an is not enough.
It does not obviate the need to respond to the letter of that Egyptian Muslim who naively believes all the writings of the orientalists, more particularly their claim that verses have been added to the Qur'ān regarding the name of the Prophet (P.B.U.H), that it was once "Qutham" or "Quthamah." This claim is false, and it is motivated by the same ulterior motive that stands behind the charge of the forgery of the Qur'ān.

Let us then return to the last point in the letter of our young Muslim Egyptian author. He says that the investigations of the orientalists have established that the Prophet (P.B.U.H) suffered from epilepsy, that the symptoms of the disease were all present in him and that he used to lose consciousness, perspire, fall into convulsions and sputter. After recovering from such seizures, the claim continues, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) would recite to the believers what he then claimed to be a Revelation from Allah, whereas that was only an aftereffect of the epileptic fits which he suffered.

The Slander of Epilepsy

To represent the phenomenon of Muhammad's Revelations (P.B.U.H) in these terms is, from the standpoint of scientific research, the gravest nonsense. The fit of epilepsy leaves the

patient utterly without memory of what has taken place. In fact, the patient completely forgets that period of his life and can recollect nothing that has happened to him in the meantime because the processes of sensing and thinking come to a complete stop during the fit. Such are the symptoms of epilepsy as science has established them. This was not the case at all with the Prophet (P.B.U.H) at the moment of Revelation, for his cognitive faculties used to be strengthened-rather than weakened-and do so to a superlative degree hitherto unknown by the people who knew him most. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) used to remember with utmost 'precision what he received by way of Revelation and recited it to his companions without a flaw. Moreover, Revelation was not always accompanied by paroxysms of the body. Much of it took place while the Prophet (P.B.U.H) was perfectly conscious, during his usual wakefulness. We have advanced sufficient evidence for this in our discussion of the Revelation of the *surah* "al Fath" upon return of the Muslims from Makkah to Yathrib after signing the Pact of Hudaybiyah.

Scientific investigation therefore reveals that the case of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was not one of epilepsy. For this reason very few orientalists have upheld this claim and these turn out to be the same authors who upheld the charge of forgery against the Qur'ān. Obviously, in charging Muhammad (P.B.U.H) with epilepsy, their motivation was not the establishment of historical fact but the derogation of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) in the eyes of his Muslim followers. Perhaps, they thought, propagation of such views would cast some suspicion upon his Revelation, for it was precisely the Revelation that came as a result of the so-called epileptic fits. This, of course, makes them all the more blameworthy and, from the standpoint of science, positively in error.

Return to Science

Had these western orientalists been candid, they would not have presented their non-scientific claims in the name of science. They did so in order to delude the ignorant who, ignorant though they be of the symptoms of the epileptic disease, are prevented by their own naïveté from checking the orientalists' claims against the writings and opinions of the men of the medical sciences. A consultation of medical literature would have quickly exposed the errors of the orientalists, deliberate or accidental, and convinced them that in an epileptic fit all the intellectual and spiritual processes come to an absolute stop. When in a fit, the epileptic patient is either in a ridiculously mechanical state of motion or on a rampage injurious to his fellow men. He is utterly unconscious, unknowing of what he himself does, or of what happens to him, very much like the somnambulant who has no control over his movements during his sleep and who cannot remember them when he wakes up. A very great difference separates an epileptic fit from a Revelation in which an intense and penetrating consciousness establishes, in full knowledge and conviction, a contact with the supernal plenum that enables the prophet (P.B.U.H) to report and convey his Revelation. Epilepsy, on the other hand, stops cognition. It reduces its patient to a mechanical state devoid of either feeling or sensation. Revelation is a spiritual heightening with which Allah prepares His prophet (P.B.U.H) to receive from Him the highest and apodeictic cosmic truths that he may convey them to mankind. Science may eventually reach some of these truths and discover the secrets and laws of the universe. The rest may never become object of human knowledge until existence on this earth has come to an end. Nonetheless, these truths are apodeictically certain, furnishing true guidance to the earnest believer though they remain opaque to the ignorant whose hearts are locked and whose vision is dim.

Incapacity of Science in Some Fields

We would have understood and appreciated the western orientalists having said: "Revelation is a strange psychic phenomenon inexplicable in terms of contemporary science." Such a statement would mean that despite its wide scope and penetration, our science is still unable to explain many spiritual and psychic phenomena of which Revelation is one. This statement is neither objectionable nor strange. Science is still unable to explain many natural, cosmic phenomena. The nature of the sun, moon, stars, and planets is still largely a matter for hypothesis. These heavenly bodies are only some of what the human eye, whether naked or through the telescope, reveals to us of the cosmos. Many of the inventions of the twentieth century that we presently take for granted were regarded by our predecessors in the nineteenth century as pure fiction. Psychic and spiritual phenomena are now subject to careful scientific study. But they have not yet been subject to the dominion of science so that it could be made to reveal their permanent role. We have often read about phenomena witnessed by the men of science and ascertained by them without explanation in terms coherent with scientific knowledge. Psychology, for instance, is a science which is not yet certain of the structures of many areas of psychic life. If this uncertainty is true of everyday phenomena, the demand to explain all the phenomena of life scientifically must be a shameful and futile exaggeration.

The Revelations of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) were phenomena witnessed by his Muslim contemporaries. The more they heard the Qur'ān, the more convinced they became of the truth of these Revelations. Among these Contemporaries were many of extreme intelligence. Others were Jews and Christians who had argued with the Prophet (P.B.U.H) for a long time before, and they believed in his mission and trusted his Revelation in every detail. Some men of Quraysh had accused Muhammad

(P.B.U.H) of magic and madness. Later, convinced that he was neither a magician nor a madman, they believed in and followed him. Since all these facts are certain, it is as unscientific to deny the phenomenon of Revelation as it is unworthy of the men of science to speak of it in derogative terms. The man of science candid in his search for the truth will not go beyond asserting that his discipline is unable to explain the phenomenon of Revelation according to the materialistic theory. But he will never deny the factuality of Revelation as reported by the companions of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and the historians of the first century of Islam. To do otherwise would be to fall under prejudice and betray the spirit of science.

Slander against Muhammad (P.B.U.H) Is Argumentum ad Hominem

Such obstinate prejudice only proves the determined concern of its author to arouse suspicion in Islam itself. Such people have been incapable of arguing against Islam because they had found it sublimely noble, simple, and easy to understand, and realized that these qualities are the sources of its strength. They hence resort to the trick of the impotent who shifts attention from the great idea beyond his reach to the person advocating it. That is the *argumentum ad hominem* fallacy which every scholar should seek to avoid. It is natural for men to concern themselves with ideas and not with the personal circumstances of their authors and advocates. Men do not give themselves the trouble to investigate the roots of a tree whose fruits they had found delectable, nor the fertilizer which had helped it to grow, as long as their purpose is not to plant a similar or better tree. When they analyze the philosophy of Plato, the plays of Shakespeare, or the paintings of Raphael, and find nothing objectionable in them, they do not look for blameworthy aspects in the lives of these

great men who constitute humanity's glory and pride. And if they try to fabricate charges against these persons, they will never succeed in convincing anyone. They only succeed in betraying themselves and exposing their ulterior motives. Casting resentment in the form of scientific research does not alter it from being what it is: namely resentment. Resentment refuses to recognize the truth; and the truth will always be too proud to allow resentment to be its source or associate. Such is the case of the orientalists' charges against the person of the Arab Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H), Seal of the Prophets (P.B.U.H); and that is why their charges fall to the ground.

That is all I have to say by way of response to those orientalists to whom the letter of the Egyptian Muslim had referred. Having thus refuted their views, let me now direct my attention to a number of observations made on the first edition of this book by the Islāmicists at home.

It is my earnest hope that such base charges unworthy of science and unacceptable to scholars will never be repeated again. Perhaps, hitherto, the orientalists felt themselves excused on the grounds that they were writing for the consumption of their fellow Christians and Europeans and that they were actually discharging a national or religious duty imposed upon them by a patriotism or faith which requires scholarly form to make its propaganda palatable. Our day, however, is different. Communication between the various corners of the globe by means of radio broadcasting and the press has made it possible for anything said or published in Europe or America today to become known throughout the Orient in that same day or even the same hour. It is therefore the duty of those who assume the scholarly profession and the pursuit of truth to tear away from their hearts and eyes every curtain of national, racial, or religious isolation. They should realize that whatever they say or write will soon reach the ears of all men throughout the world and will. be subject to universal criticism and scrutiny. The absolute

and unconditional truth should be the objective of every one of us; and let us all take due care to connect the present reality of mankind with its past, to regard humanity as one great unit undivided by nationality, race or religion. Let such connection be the bond of free fraternity in the pursuit of truth, goodness and beauty, and the noblest ideal that humanity has ever known. Such a bond is alone capable of guiding humanity in its quick march toward happiness and perfection.

Observations of Muslim Islāmicists

Whereas the naive believers in the exaggerations of the orientalists blame us for having recourse to the Arabic sources and depending upon them, a number of Muslim Islāmicists blame us for turning to the writings of the orientalists rather than limiting ourselves to the Islamic biographies and books of Hadith. The latter have also criticized us for not following the same method as these ancient books.

It was on this basis that some of them made friendly observations in hope of reaching the fact of the matter in question. Others made observations which betray such ignorance or prejudice as no scholar would wish to associate himself with. The former took note of the fact that we have not reported the miracles of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as the biographies and Hadith have done. in this regard we wrote in the conclusion of our first edition: "The Life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), therefore, has realized the highest ideals possible to man. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was very careful that the Muslims should think of him as a human to whom Revelation came. He never accepted that any miracle be attributed to him other than his association with the advent of the Qur'ān, and actually told this much to his companions." As regards the story of the splitting of Muhammad's chest (P.B.U.H) we wrote: "Orientalists as well as

Muslim scholars take their attitude towards this event in the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) on the grounds that Muhammad's whole life was all too human and noble and that he never resorted to miracles as previous prophets had done, in order to prove the veracity of his Revelation. In taking this attitude, the above-mentioned thinkers rely upon the Arab and Muslim historians who share their view and who deny any place in the biography of the Arab Prophet (P.B.U.H) to all that is irrational. They regard their stand as being in perfect accord with the Qur'ān's call to man to study the creation of Allah and discover therein His immutable laws. They find the claim for miracles incoherent with the Qur'ān's condemnation of the associationists as men who do not reason, as men who have no faculties with which to reason." Other more considerate critics criticized us for having mentioned at all the orientalists' attacks upon the Prophet (P.B.U.H), though we did so but to refute them. In their opinion, this procedure does not accord with the veneration due to the person of the Prophet (P.B.U.H). Lastly, there is the class of prejudiced critics who were known even before the first edition of this book had appeared and, indeed, even before my researches had been collected in book form. Their strongest criticism was that I have given my work the title, "The Life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H)," without joining it to an invocation of peace and blessing upon him. Such invocations occur frequently in the course of the book. I had thought, nonetheless, that they would discover their prejudice once the title page of the first edition came out decorated, as it was, with the verse:

﴿ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتَهُۥ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى ٱلنَّبِيِّ ۚ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ صَلُّوا۟ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا۟ تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾ ﴾ سورة الأحزاب أية ٥٦

(Allah and His Angels send blessings on the Prophet: O you that believe! send blessings on him, and salute him with all respect.) (Al-Ahzab:56)

I had also thought that the method used in this book would itself dissolve their prejudice. By insisting as they did, however, they betrayed their ignorance of Islamic truths and their satisfaction with the imitation of their ancestors.

Let us begin by answering their false criticism in the hope that neither they nor any others will repeat it regarding this or any other book. We shall refuse their criticism by turning to the books of the classical leaders of Islamic knowledge. Everyone will then realize the free stand Islam has taken *vis-à-vis* all verbal restrictions and will then appreciate the *hadith,* "This religion is indeed sound. Analyze it as you wish, but gently. You will never find a flaw therein." Abū al Baqa' at the beginning wrote in his book, *Al Kulliyyāt:* "Writing the invocation of a book occurred during the 'Abbāsi period. That is why the *Sahih* of al Bukhāri and others are devoid of it." The majority of the great men of Islamic knowledge agree that the invocation of peace and blessing upon the Prophet (P.B.U.H) need not be made by the Muslim more than once in his lifetime. In his book *Al Bahr al Ra'iq,* ibn Nujaym wrote:

"The religious imperative implied in the Divine command, 'Invoke upon him Allah's peace and blessing,' is that it should be made at 'least once in a lifetime whether during or outside the prayer. For no command by itself implies repetition. On this there is no disagreement." Likewise, al Shāfi'i contended with his colleagues on "whether or not the invocation of Allah's peace and blessing on the Prophet (P.B.U.H) is imperative during the prayer or outside of it. Prayer is itself invocation. As it stands in the above mentioned verse, to invoke Allah's peace and blessing upon the Prophet (P.B.U.H) simply means that one should ask Allah to bless the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and to salute him the salutation of peace." That is the lesson which the Muslim men of knowledge and their leaders have taught in this regard. It proves that those who claim that this invocation is imperative whenever the name of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) is mentioned or written are

simply exaggerating. Had they known the foregoing facts, and that the greatest traditionists had not written such an invocation regarding the Prophet (P.B.U.H) on the title pages or beginnings of their collections of *hadiths,* they would perhaps have avoided falling into their present error.

Refutation of the Orientalists and its Method

As to those who claim that it does not become a Muslim scholar to repeat the attacks of the Orientalists and the missionaries against the Prophet (P.B.U.H) even in order to refute them, they have really nothing to stand upon except an Islamic emotion which we salute. From the religious as well as scholarly points of view, they simply have no argument at all. The Holy Qur'ān itself reported much of what the associationists of Makkah used to say about the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and refuted them with clear and eloquent argument. The Arabic style of the Qur'ān is the highest and its morals the noblest. It mentioned the accusation of the Quraysh that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was either possessed or a magician. The Holy Qur'an said: "

﴿ وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُۥ بَشَرٌ لِّسَانُ ٱلَّذِى يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجَمِىٌّ وَهَـٰذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِىٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾ ﴾

سورة النحل أية ١٠٣

(We know indeed that they say, "It is a man that teaches him." The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear.) (Al-Nahl: 103)

There are many such statements in the Qur'ān. Moreover, an argument is not scientifically refuted unless it is honestly and precisely stated. In writing this book, my purpose has been to reach objective truth by means of scholarly research. And I have written my book so that both Muslims and non-Muslims may read it and be convinced of this objective truth. Such a purpose cannot be achieved unless the scholar be honest in his pursuit. He should never hesitate to acknowledge the truth whencesoever it may come.

Biographies and Hadith Books

Let us return to the first criticism the Muslim students of Islam have kindly directed to our work, namely, that we have not taken into consideration the Islamic biographies and Hadith books and that we have not followed the same methodology as these ancient works. It should suffice to say in reply to this criticism that I have resolved to follow the modern scientific method and to write in the style of the century and that I have taken this resolution because it is the only proper one in the eyes of the contemporary world, whether for historiography or any other discipline. This being the case, ancient methods are ruled out *a priori.* Between these and the methods of our age there is great difference, the most obvious of which is the freedom to criticise. Most of the ancient works were written for a religious purpose and as devotional exercises, whereas contemporary writers are interested only in scientific analysis and criticism. To say this much concerning my method and work should be sufficient answer to their criticism. But I see the need for a more detailed treatment in order to show the reasons why our classical scholars of the past did not, and those of the present should not, assume in wholesale fashion the veracity of all that the books of biography and Hadith have brought. It is also my intention to clarify the reasons why we ought to observe the rules of

scientific criticism as closely as possible in order to guard against all possible errors.

The Difference between These Books

The first of these reasons is the difference of these books in their reporting of events supposed to have taken place in the life of the Arab Prophet (P.B.U.H). Those who studied these books have observed that the miracles and extraordinary events reported increased or decreased for no reason other than the change in the time when they were written. The earlier report fewer miracles than the later; and the miracles they do report are less unreasonable than those reported in later books. The oldest known biography, namely, that of ibn Hishām for example, has far less material than the *Tārikh* of Abū al Fidā', than *Al Shifā' of* Qadi 'Ayyad and of most later writings. The same is true of the books of the HadIth. Some of them tell a story and others omit it, or they report it and point out that it is not trustworthy. The objective researcher investigating these books must therefore have a standard by which he can evaluate the various claims. That which agrees with the standard he would find acceptable and that which does not, he would subject to closer scrutiny wherever possible.

Our ancestors have followed this method in their investigations at times, and they have omitted doing so at others. An example of their omission is the story of "the daughters of Allah." It is told that when the Prophet (P.B.U.H), under ever-increasing oppression' of Quraysh, recited the Qur'ānic *surah* "al Najm" and arrived at the verse:

﴿ أَفَرَءَيۡتُمُ ٱللَّٰتَ وَٱلۡعُزَّىٰ ۝١٩ وَمَنَوٰةَ ٱلثَّالِثَةَ ٱلۡأُخۡرَىٰٓ ۝٢٠ ﴾

سورة النجم الآيتان ١٩-٢٠

(Have you seen Lat, and 'Uzza, And another, the Third (goddess), Manat?) (An-Najm:19-20)

He added: "Those are the goddesses on high; their intercession with Allah is worthy of our prayers." He (P.B.U.H) then went on reciting the *surah* to its end and when he finished, he (P.B.U.H) prostrated himself in worship, and Muslims and associationists joined him and did likewise. This story was reported by ibn Sa'd in his *Al Tabaqat al Kubrā* without criticism. It also occurs with little variation in some books of Hadith. Ibn Ishaq, however, reported the story and judged it as being the fabrication of *zindiqs.*[1] *'In* his *Al Bidāyah wa al Nihāyah fi al Tarikh,* ibn Kathir wrote: "They mentioned the story of the goddesses of Makkah, whereas we have decided to omit it for fear that the uninstructed may naively accept it as truth. The story was first reported in the books of Hadith." He then reported a tradition from Bukhāri in this regard and qualified it as being "unique toBukhari, rejected by Muslim." As for me, I did not hesitate to reject the story altogether and to agree with ibn Ishaq that it was the fabrication of *zindiqs.* In analyzing it I brought together several pieces of evidence. In addition to its denial of the infallibility of the Prophets in their conveyance of their Divine messages, this story must also be subject to modern scientific criticism.

The Age of These Books

The books of the ancestors should be closely scrutinized and criticised in a scientific manner because the most ancient of them was written a hundred or more years after the death of the Prophet (P.B.U.H). At that time, many political and religious movements were spreading throughout the Islamic Empire, each of which fabricated all kinds of stories and *hadiths* to justify its

own cause. The later books, written during even more turbulent and unsettled times, are more vulnerable. Political struggles caused a great deal of trouble to the collectors of Hadith because they took utmost care in scrutinizing these various reports, rejecting the suspicious, and confirming only those which passed the severest tests. It is sufficient to remember here the travails of al Bukhāri in his travels throughout the Muslim World undertaken for this purpose. He told us that he had found some six hundred thousand *hadiths* current, of which only 4,000 he could confirm as true. The ratio is that of one to 150 *hadiths.* As for. Abū Dāwud, he could confirm 4,800 *hadiths* out of half a million. Such was the task of all collectors of *hadiths.* Nonetheless, many of the *hadiths* which they had found true after criticism were found untrue by a number of other scholars under further criticism. Such was the case of the goddesses. If such is the case of HadIth, despite all the efforts spent by the early collectors, how trustworthy can the later biographies of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) be? How can their reports be taken without scientific scrutiny?

Effects of Islamic Political Strife

In fact, the political struggles of the first century of Islam caused the various parties to invent, and press into their service, a great number of stories and *hadiths.* No Hadith has been committed to writing until the last years of the Umawi period. It was 'Umar ibn 'Abd al 'Aziz who ordered its collection for the first time. The job, however, was not completed until the reign of al Ma'mun, the time when "the true *hadith* was as discernible from the false as a white hair is in the fur of a black bull," to borrow the phrase of Daraqutni. The Hadith was not collected in the first century of Islam perhaps because of the reported command of the Prophet (P.B.U.H):"Do not write down

anything I say except the Qur'ān. Whoever has written something other than the Qur'ān let him destroy it." Nonetheless, the *hadiths* of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) were current in those days and must have been varied. During his caliphate, 'Umar ibn al Khattāb once tried to deal with the problem by committing the Hadith to writing. The companions of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) whom he consulted encouraged him, but he was not quite sure whether he should proceed. One day, moved by Allah's inspiration, he made up his mind and announced: "I wanted to have the traditions of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) written down, but I fear that the Book of Allah might be encroached upon. Hence I shall not permit this to happen." He therefore changed his mind and instructed the Muslims throughout the provinces: "Whoever has a document bearing a prophetic tradition shall destroy it." The Hadith therefore continued to be transmitted orally and was not collected and written down until the period of al Ma'mūn.

The Standard of Hadith Criticism

Despite the great care and precision of the Hadith scholars, much of what they regarded as true was later proved to be spurious. In his commentary on the collection of Muslim, al Nawawi wrote: "A number of scholars discovered many *hadiths* in the collections of Muslim and Bukhāri which do not fulfill the conditions of verification assumed by these men." The collectors attached the greater weight to the trustworthiness of the narrators. Their criterion was certainly valuable, but it was not sufficient. In our opinion, the criterion for the Hadith criticism, as well as standard for materials concerning the Prophet's life (P.B.U.H), is the one which the Prophet (P.B.U.H) himself gave. He (P.B.U.H) said: "After I am gone differences will arise among you. Compare whatever is reported to be mine with the Book of Allah; that which agrees therewith you may accept as

having come from me; that which disagrees you will reject as a fabrication." This valid standard is observed by the great men of Islam right from the very beginning. It continues to be the standard of thinkers today. Ibn Khaldun wrote: "I do not believe any *hadith* or report of a companion of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) to be true which differs from the common sense meaning of the Qur'ān, no matter how trustworthy the narrators may have been. It is not impossible that a narrator appears to be trustworthy though he may be moved by ulterior motive. If the *hadiths* were criticised for their textual contents as they were for the narrators who transmitted them a great number would have had to be rejected. It is a recognized principle that a *hadith* could be declared, spurious if it departs from the common sense meaning of the Qur'ān from the recognized principles of the Shari'ah,'[2] the rules of logic, the evidence of sense, or any other self-evident truth." This criterion, as given by the Prophet (P.B.U.H) as well as ibn Khaldun, perfectly accords with modern scientific criticism.

True, after Muhammad's death (P.B.U.H) the Muslims differed, and they fabricated thousands of *hadiths* and reports to support their various causes. From the day Abu Lu'lu'ah, the servant of al Mughirah, killed 'Umar ibn al Khattāb and 'Uthmān ibn 'Affan assumed the caliphate, the old pre-Islāmic enmity of Banu Hashim and Banū Umayyah reappeared. When, upon the murder of 'Uthman, civil war broke out between the Muslims, 'A'ishah fought against 'Ali and 'Ali's supporters consolidated themselves into a party, the fabrication of *hadiths* spread to the point where 'Ali ibn Abū Talib himself had to reject the practice and warn against it. He reportedly said: "We have no book and no writing to read to you except the Qur'ān and this sheet which I have received from the Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H) in which he specified the duties prescribed by charity." Apparently, this exhortation did not stop the Hadith narrators from fabricating their stories either in support of a

cause they advocated, or of a virtue or practice to which they exhorted the Muslims and which they thought would have more appeal if vested with prophetic authority. When the Banū Umayyah firmly established themselves in power, their protagonists among the Hadith narrators deprecated the prophetic traditions reported by the party of 'Ali ibn Abū Tālib, and the latter defended those traditions and propagated them with all the means at their disposal. Undoubtedly they also deprecated the traditions reported by 'A'ishah, "Mother of the Faithful." A humorous piece of reportage was given us by ibn 'Asākir who wrote: " Abū Sa'd Isma'il ibn al Muthannā al Istrabadhi was giving a sermon one day in Damascus when a man stood up and asked him what he thought of the *hadith* of the Prophet (P.B.U.H): 'I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali is its gate.' Abū Sa'd pondered the question for a while and then replied:' Indeed! No one knows this *hadith* of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) except those who lived in the first century of Islam. What the Prophet (P.B.U.H) had said, he continued, was, rather, "I am the city of knowledge; Abū Bakr is its foundation; 'Umar, its walls; 'Uthman its ceiling; and 'Ali its gate.' The audience was quite pleased with his reply and asked him to furnish them with its chain of narrators. Abū Sa'd could not furnish any chain and was terribly embarrassed." Thus *hadiths* were fabricated for political and other purposes. This wanton multiplication alarmed the Muslims because many ran counter to the Book of Allah. The attempts to stop this wave of fabrication under the Umawis did not succeed. When the 'Abbasis took over, and al Ma'mun assumed the caliphate almost two centuries after the death of the Prophet (P.B.U.H), the fabricated *hadiths* numbered in the thousands and hundreds of thousands and contained an unimaginable amount of contradiction and variety. It was then that the collectors applied themselves to the task of putting the Hadith together and the biographers of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) wrote their biographies. Al Waqidi, ibn Hishām and al Madā'ini

lived and wrote their books in the days of al Ma'mun. They could not afford to contradict the caliphate and hence could not apply with the precision due the Prophet's criterion (P.B.U.H) that his traditions ought to be checked against the Qur'ān and accepted only if they accorded therewith.

Had this criterion, which does not differ from the modern method of scientific criticism, been applied with precision, the ancient masters would have altered much of their writing. Circumstances of history imposed upon them the application of it to some of their writings but not to others. The later generations inherited their method of treating the biography of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) without questioning it. Had they been true to history, they would have applied this criterion in general as well as in detail. No reported events disagreeing with the Qur'ān would have been spared, and none would have been confirmed but those which agreed with the Book of Allah as well as the laws of nature. Even so, these *hadiths* would have been subject to strict analysis and established only with valid proof and incontestable evidence. This stand was taken by the greatest Muslim scholars of the past as well as of the present. The grand Shaykh of al Azhar, Mohammad Mustafa al Maraghl, wrote in his foreword to this book: "Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had only one irresistible miracle the Qur'ān. But it is not irrational. How eloquent is the verse of al Busayri: 'Allah did not try us with anything irrational. Thus, we fell under neither doubt nor illusion.'

The late Mohammad Rashid Rida, editor of *al Manār,* wrote in answer to our critics: "The most important objection which the Azharis and the Sufis raise against Haykal concerns the problem of the miracles. In my book, ***Al Wahy al Mukammadi,*** I have analyzed the problem from all aspects in the second chapter and the second section of the fifth chapter. I have established there that the Qur'ān alone is the conclusive proof of the prophet-hood of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as well as of the other prophets of their

messages and prophecies regarding him. In our age it is impossible to prove any work of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) except by the Qur'ān. From its stand-point, supernatural events are ***ipso facto*** doubtful. Besides the ubiquitous reports of their occurrence in all ages and places, they are believed in by the superstitious of all faiths. I have also analyzed the causes of this predeliction for belief in miracles and distinguished the miraculous from the spiritual and shown the relationship of both to cosmic laws.

In his book, ***Al Islam wa al Nasrāniyyah,*** Mohammad 'Abduh, the great scholar and leader wrote: "Islam, therefore, and its demand for faith in Allah and in His unity, depend only on rational proof and common sense human thinking. Islam does not overwhelm the mind with the supernatural, confuse the understanding with the extraordinary, impose acquiescent silence by resorting to heavenly intervention, nor does it impede the movement of thought by any sudden cry of divinity. All the Muslims are agreed, except those whose opinion is insignificant, that faith in Allah is prior to faith in prophethood and that it is not possible to believe in a prophet except after one has come to believe in Allah. It is unreasonable to demand faith in Allah on the ground that the prophets or the revealed books had said so, for it is unreasonable to believe that any book had been Revealed by Allah unless one already believed that Allah exists and that it is possible for Him to reveal a book or send a messenger.

I am inclined to think that those who wrote biographies of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) agreed with this view. The earlier generation of them could not apply it because of the historical circumstances in which they lived. The later generation of them suspended the principle deliberately on account of their belief that the more miraculous their portrayal of the Prophet (P.B.U.H), the more faith this would engender among their audience. They assumed, quite naively, that the inclusion of these extraneous matters into his biography achieved a good purpose. Had they lived to our day and seen how the enemies of

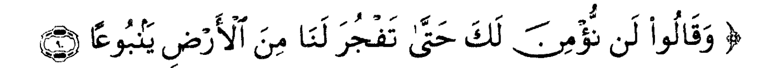
Islam had taken their writings as an argument against Islam and its people, they would have followed the Qur'ān more closely and agreed with al Ghazzāli, Mohammad 'Abduh, al Marāghi, and all other objective scholars. And had they lived in our day and age, and witnessed how their stories have alienated many Muslim minds and hearts instead of onfirming their faith, they would have been satisfied with the indubitable proofs and arguments of the Book of Allah.

Reports Condemned by Reason and Science

Now that the defect of reports condemned by reason and science has become obvious, scientific and critical analysis of the materials involved is demanded. This is equally the demand of Islam and a service to it as well as to the history of the Arab Prophet (P.B.U.H). It is a necessary requisite if that history is to illuminate the road of mankind towards high culture and civilization.

The Qur'ān and Miracles

We will quickly agree with the views of the objective Muslim scholars as soon as we compare a number of narratives from the biography and Hadith books with the Qur'ān. The latter told us that the Makkans had asked the Prophet (P.B.U.H) to perform some miracles if they were to believe in him (P.B.U.H); it mentioned specifically their demands, and refuted them. Allah the Almighty said:


﴿ وَقَالُوا لَن نُّؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنبُوعًا ﴾

أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّن نَّخِيلٍ وَعِنَبٍ فَتُفَجِّرَ ٱلْأَنْهَٰرَ خِلَٰلَهَا تَفْجِيرًا ﴿٩١﴾ أَوْ تُسْقِطَ ٱلسَّمَآءَ كَمَا زَعَمْتَ عَلَيْنَا كِسَفًا أَوْ تَأْتِىَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ قَبِيلًا ﴿٩٢﴾ أَوْ يَكُونَ لَكَ بَيْتٌ مِّن زُخْرُفٍ أَوْ تَرْقَىٰ فِى ٱلسَّمَآءِ وَلَن نُّؤْمِنَ لِرُقِيِّكَ حَتَّىٰ تُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا كِتَٰبًا نَّقْرَؤُهُۥ ۗ قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّى هَلْ كُنتُ إِلَّا بَشَرًا رَّسُولًا ﴿٩٣﴾ ﴾

سورة الإسراء الآيات ٩٠- ٩٣

(They say: "We shall not believe in you, until thou cause a spring to gush forth for us from the earth, "Or (until) you have a garden of date trees and vines, and cause rivers to gush forth in their midst, carrying abundant water, "Or you cause the sky to fall in pieces, as you say (will happen), against us, or you bring Allah and the angels before (us) face to face; "Or you have a house adorned with gold, or you mount a ladder right into the skies. No, we shall not even believe in your mounting until you send down to us a book that we can read." Say: "Glory to my Lord! Am I aught but a man, a messenger?")

(Al Isra' :90-93)

Allah the Almighty also said:

﴿ وَأَقْسَمُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَٰنِهِمْ لَئِن جَآءَتْهُمْ ءَايَةٌ لَّيُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهَا ۚ قُلْ إِنَّمَا ٱلْءَايَٰتُ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ أَنَّهَآ إِذَا جَآءَتْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَنُقَلِّبُ أَفْـِٔدَتَهُمْ وَأَبْصَٰرَهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا۟ بِهِۦٓ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَنَذَرُهُمْ فِى

طُغۡيَٰنِهِمۡ يَعۡمَهُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾ ۞ وَلَوۡ أَنَّنَا نَزَّلۡنَآ إِلَيۡهِمُ ٱلۡمَلَٰٓئِكَةَ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ
ٱلۡمَوۡتَىٰ وَحَشَرۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ كُلَّ شَيۡءٖ قُبُلٗا مَّا كَانُواْ لِيُؤۡمِنُوٓاْ إِلَّآ أَن يَشَآءَ ٱللَّهُ
وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكۡثَرَهُمۡ يَجۡهَلُونَ ﴿١١١﴾ ﴾ سورة الأنعام الآيات ١٠٩-١١١

They swear their strongest oaths by Allah, that if a (special) Sign came to them, by it they would believe. Say: "Certainly (all) Signs are in the power of Allah: but what will make you (Muslims) realize that (even) if (special) Signs came, they will not believe? We (too) shall turn to (confusion) their hearts and their eyes, even as they refused to believe in this in the first instance: We shall leave them in their trespasses, to (stumble blindly)

Even if We did send unto them angels, and the dead did speak unto them, and We gathered together all things before their very eyes, they are not the ones to believe, unless it is in Allah's Plan. But most of them ignore (the truth). (Al-An'am:109-111)

There is no mention in the whole Qur'ān of any miracle intended to support the prophethood of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) except the Qur'ān, notwithstanding its acknowledgment of many of the miracles performed with Allah's permission by the prophets preceding Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and description of the many other favors which Allah has bestowed upon him. What the Qur'ān did report about the Arab Prophet (P.B.U.H) does not violate any of the laws of nature in the least degree.

The Greatest Miracle

Since this is the logic of the Book of Allah and is demanded

by the advent of His Prophet (P.B.U.H), what reason could have caused some of the Muslims of the past, and still cause some of them in the present, to attribute miracles to Muhammad (P.B.U.H)? It must be their reading in the Qur'ān of miracles performed by prophets preceding Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and their jumping to the conclusion that such supernatural occurrences are necessary for prophethood. They thus believed the stories circulating about Muhammad's miracles (P.B.U.H) despite the fact that they could not find any confirmation of them in the Qur'ān. They mistakenly believed that the more of them they could muster the more convinced them and their audiences would be of their faith. To compare the Arab Prophet (P.B.U.H) with his predecessor prophets is to compare the Incomparable. For he was the last of the prophets and the first one sent by Allah unto all mankind rather than unto any specific people alone. That is why Allah desired that the "miracle" of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) be human and rational, though unmatchable by any humans or genii. This miracle is the Qur'ān itself, the greatest that Allah permitted. He-may His glory be praised-willed that His Prophet's mission (P.B.U.H) be established by rational argument and clear proof. He willed that His religion achieve victory in the life of His prophet (P.B.U.H) and that men might see in his victory the might and dominion of Allah. Had Allah willed that a material miracle force the conversion of Makkah, the miracle would have occurred and would have been mentioned in the Qur'ān. But some men do not believe except in that which their reason understands and corroborates. The proper way to convince them would be to appeal to their understanding and reason. Allah made the Qur'ān Muhammad's convincing argument, a miracle of the "illiterate Prophet (P.B.U.H)." He willed that men's entry into Islam and the sense of their faith in Him be dependent upon true conviction and apodeictic evidence. A religion thus founded would be worthy of the faith of all men in all times whatever their race or language.

Should a people convert to Islam today who did not need any miracle beside the Qur'ān, this fact would neither detract from their faith nor from the worth of their conversion. As long as a people is not itself recipient of a Revelation, it is perfectly legitimate to subject all the reports of such Revelation to the closest scrutiny. That which unquestionable proof confirms is acceptable; the rest may validly be put to question. To believe in Allah alone without associate does not need recourse to a miracle. Nor does it need more than consideration of the nature of this universe which Allah created. On the other hand, to believe in the Prophethood of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), who, by command of Allah, called men precisely unto such faith, does not need any miracles other than the Qur'ān. Nor does it need any more than the presentation of the revealed text to consciousness.

Were a people to believe today in this religion without the benefit of any miracle other than the Qur'än, its faithful would belong to one of the following kinds: the man whose mind and heart does not oscillate but is guided by Allah directly to the object of his faith, as was the case with Abū Bakr who believed without hesitation; and, the man who does not seek his faith in the miraculous but in the natural *(i.e.,* the created world, unlimited in space or time and running perfectly in accordance with eternal and immutable laws), and whose reason guides him from these laws of nature to the creator and fashioner thereof. Even if miracles did exist, they would constitute no problem for either kind of believer who regards them as mere signs of Divine mercy. Many leaders of Islamic knowledge regard this kind of faith as indeed the highest. Some of them even prescribe that faith should not stand on a foundation of fear of Allah's punishment or ambition to win His reward. They insist that it should be held purely for the sake of Allah and involve an actual annihilation of self in Allah. To Him all, things belong; and so do we. To Him, we and all things shall return.

The Believers during the Life of the Prophet (P.B.U.H)

Those who believe today in Allah and in His Prophet (P.B.U.H) and whose faith does not rest on miracles are in the same position as those who believed during the life of the Prophet (P.B.U.H). History has not reported to us that any one of those early companions had entered the faith because of a miracle he witnessed. Rather, it was the conclusive Divine argument conveyed through Revelation and the superlatively noble life of the Prophet himself (P.B.U.H) which conduced those men to their faith. In fact, all biographies mention that a number of those who believed in Muhammad (P.B.U.H) before the ***Isra'*** abandoned their faith when the Prophet (P.B.U.H) reported to them that he had been transported during the night from the Mosque of Makkah to the Blessed One of Jerusalem. Even Suraqah ibn Ju'shum, who pursued Muhammad (P.B.U.H) on the latter's flight to Madinah in order to capture him dead or alive and win the prize the Makkans had placed on his head, did not believe despite the miracle which the biographers have reported to have taken place on his way there. History has not reported a single case of an associationist who believed in Muhammad (P.B.U.H) because of a miracle performed. Islam has no parallel to the case of the magicians of Pharaoh whose rods were swallowed up by that of Moses.'

The Gharanique and Tabūk

The classical biographies are not unanimous in their reportage of the so-called miracles. Many a time their narratives were subject to strong criticism despite their corroboration by the books of Hadith. We have already referred to the question of the goddesses in this preface, and we have also treated the problem

in detail in the course of this work. The story of the opening of Muhammad's chest (P.B.U.H) as reported by Halimah, Muhammad's wet nurse (P.B.U.H), is equally inconclusive)" There is a difference of opinion concerning Halimah's reports as well as the age of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) at which the story has supposedly taken place. Likewise, the reports of the biographies and of the Hadith concerning Zayd and Zaynab are devoid of foundation, as we shall have occasion to see later.'[9] Similar disagreement exists as regards the story of the military expedition to Tabūk (Jaysh al 'Usrah). In his *Sahih,* Muslim reported from Mu'adh ibn Jabal that "the Prophet (P.B.U.H) told ibn Jabal and his companions who were marching to Tabūk: 'Tomorrow, but not before mid-day, you will, with Allah's leave, reach the spring of Tabūk. You will not, however, touch its waters until I come.' When we arrived, we found that two of our men had reached it before us and the spring had very little water. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) asked the two men whether they had touched the water of the spring, and they confessed. He (P.B.U.H) criticized and scolded them as he should. They then filled a container with water from the spring. Mu'adh said: 'The Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H) washed his face and his hands and poured the water back into the spring whereupon the spring gushed forth abundantly (he might have said 'profusely') until all men drank and were satisfied.

عن معاذ بن جبل رضى الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: «يوشك يا معاذ إن طالت بك حياة أن ترى ما ها هنا قد ملئ جناناً»

رواه مسلم

On the authority of Mu'adh ibn Jabal (may Allah be satisfied with him) who said that the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H) said: "0 Mu'ādh, If you were to live long enough, you would see this place full of gardens.' (Muslim)

In the biographies, on the other hand, the story of Tabūk is told in a different way without mention of any miracles. Thus we read in Ibn Hishām's ***The Life, of Muhammad (P.B.U.H):*** "When, in the morning, the men discovered they had no water, they complained to the Prophet (P.B.U.H).

He (P.B.U.H) prayed to Allah, who then sent a rain cloud. So much rain fell that everybody drank his fill and filled his skin. Ibn Ishaq said: 'Asim ibn 'Umar ibn Qatadah, reporting from Mahmūd ibn Labid, who in turn was reporting what he heard from some men of the Banū 'Abdal Ashhal tribe, said: 'I said to Mahmūd, 'Did these Muslims know that some hypocrites were among them'? He answered, 'Yes. Sometimes a man would tell a hypocrite even if he were his brother, father, uncle or fellow tribesman; at other times he would not be able to differentiate between them.' Mahmūd continued: 'A fellow tribesman told me of a well-known hypocrite who used to accompany the Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H) wherever he went, and who was present at this expedition. After the miracle had taken place, we went to him and asked: 'Are you still in doubt after what you saw with your own eyes?' He answered, 'It was but a passing cloud.'

Such a wide range of difference as separates the classical accounts of this story makes it impossible for us to affirm it conclusively. Those who apply themselves to the study of it should not stop at probable solutions which neither confirm nor deny the classical reports. Whenever they are confronted by a story not supported by positive evidence, the least they can do is to discard it. Should other investigators later on discover the required evidence, the duty of presenting the story with its proof-claims would devolve upon them.

My Methodology

This is the method which I have followed in my study of the

life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), the Prophet of the Islamic mission (P.B.U.H) to mankind. It characterizes my work throughout; for ever since I decided to undertake this study I resolved that it would be conducted in accordance with the modern scientific method in all sincerity and for the sake of truth alone. That is what I announced in the preface of this book and prayed, in the conclusion of its first edition, that I may have accomplished, thereby paving the way for deeper and wiser investigations. I had hoped that this and similar studies would clear for science a number of psychic and spiritual problems and establish facts which would guide mankind to the new civilization for which it is groping.

There is no doubt that deepening of analysis and extending the scope of the investigation would unlock many secrets which many people have thought for a long time to lie beyond scientific explanation. The clearer the understanding mankind achieves of the psychological and spiritual secrets of the world, the stronger man's relation to the world will become and, hence, the greater his happiness. Man will then be better able to rehabilitate himself in the world when he knows its secrets, just as he became better able to enjoy it when he understood the latent forces of electricity and radio.

It therefore behooves any scholar applying himself to such a study to address his work not only to the Muslims but to mankind as a whole. The final purpose of such work is not, as some of them think, purely religious. Rather, it is, following the example of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), that all mankind may better learn the way to perfection. Fulfillment of this purpose is not possible without the guidance of reason and heart, and the conviction and certainty they bring when founded on true perception and knowledge. Speculative thinking based upon imprecise knowledge which is not conditioned by the scientific method is likely to go astray and point to conclusions far removed from the truth. By nature, our thinking is deeply

influenced by temperament. Men with equal training and knowledge, common purpose and resolution, often differ from one another for no reason other than their difference in temperament. Some are passionate, deeply perceptive, over-hasty in their conclusions, mystical, stoic, ascetic, inclined towards matter, or utterly conditioned by it. Others are different, and their views of the world naturally separate them from one another. As far as artistic expression and practical living are concerned, this variety of the humankind is a great blessing. It is, however, a curse in the field of scientific endeavor which seeks to serve the higher benefit of mankind as a whole. The study of history should search for high ideals within the facts of human life. Anyone who applies himself to this search should therefore be free from passion and prejudice. No method succeeds as well in avoiding these pitfalls as the scientific method, and no method will more surely lead to error than that which uses the materials of history to propagate a certain view or bends them to corroborate a certain prejudice.

The researches of Orientalists

Many western Orientalists have been affected in their so-called scientific research by their preconceptions and passions. The same is true of many Muslim authors as well. More surprising in both is the fact that each had taken the passionate and prejudiced propaganda of the other as basic sourcework, and eacji had claimed for his writing the objectivity which belongs to a research done for the sake of truth alone. Neither realized how deeply affected he was by his own vehement reaction to the propaganda of the other. Had either party taken the trouble to analyze objectively the work of the other, the respective claims would have dissolved and crumbled. Had any author kept his own predelictions at bay, immunizing himself against them by

applying scientific principles, his writings would have had a more lasting effect on his readers. In this preface I have attempted to expose as briefly as possible some of the errors of both parties; I hope I have done so with fairness and objectivity.

It is not possible to expect the western Orientalists to carry out their researches in Islamic matters with such precision and fairness, however sincere and scientific they may be. It is especially difficult for them to master the secrets of the Arabic language and to know its usage, its nuances and rules. Moreover, they are inevitably affected by the history of western Christianity which makes them regard all other religions with suspicion. The history of the struggle between Christianity and science affects equally the very few Orientahists who are still Christians. It causes them in their Islamic studies to fall under the same prejudice which generally characterizes all their Christian or religious research: namely, that one or the other party's line must be vindicated against its opposite. The candid Orientahists, however, cannot be blamed for this. For no man can completely escape the conditioning of his time and place. Nonetheless, this conditioning vitiates their Islamic researches and clouds their vision of the truth. All this imposes upon the Muslim scholars, whether in the religious or other fields of Islamic research, the very grave burden of studying their legacy with precision and exactitude, according to the scientific method. Assisted as they are by their mastery of the Arabic language and understanding of Arab life in general, their researches should convince all or some Orientalists of their errors; these researchers should also persuade them to accept the new results readily and with intellectual satisfaction.

The Muslims and these (those) Research

Such results will not be easy to achieve, nor are they

impossible or altogether difficult. Patience, perseverance in study and research, sound judgment, and free thinking are all required. Moreover, this is an extremely grave matter, grave in its promises for or threat to the future of Islam, as well as mankind. It seems to me that to undertake it well, one must distinguish between two periods of Muslim history: the first begins with Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and ends with the murder of 'Uthman; the second begins with the murder of 'Uthman and ends with the closing of the gates of *ijtihād.* In the first period, Muslim agreement was complete. It stood unaffected by the conquest of foreign lands, the War of Apostasy, the so-called "differences over the caliphate." After the murder of 'Uthman, disagreement spread among the Muslims; civil war was declared between 'Ali and Mu'awiyah; insurgence and rebellion continued; and politics played a serious role even in the religious life itself. In order to help the reader appreciate this difference, let us compare the principles implied in the accession speeches of Abū Bakr and al Mansur al 'Abbasi. The former said: "0 men! Here I have been assigned the job of ruling over you while I am not the best among you. If I do well in my job, help me. If I do wrong, redress me. Truthfulness is fidelity, and lying is treason. The weak shall be strong in my eye until I restore to them their right, and the strong shall be weak in my eye until I have dispossessed them of that right. No people give up fighting for the cause of Allah but He inflicts upon them abject subjection; and no people give themselves to lewdness but He envelops them with misery. Obey me as long as I obey Allah and His Prophet (P.B.U.H). But if I disobey Allah's command or His Prophet (P.B.U.H), then no obedience is incumbent upon you. Rise to your prayer so he may have mercy on you." The other said: "0 men! I am the power of Allah on His earth. I rule you with His guidance and confirmation. I am the guardian over His wealth and I manage it by His will and in accordance with His pattern. I disburse from it with His permission, for He has made

me the lock. If He chooses to open me so that you may receive therefrom and be provided for, He will. And if He chooses to keep me locked, He will . . . . "A comparison of these two speeches is sufficient to realize the great change which had taken place in the basic rules of Muslim life in less than two centuries. It was a change from the rule of *shurā'* to that of absolute power derived from Divine right.

Revolts and successive changes of government and political principles were the cause of the retrogression and decay of the Islamic state. Despite the fact that Islam and the civilization to which it gave birth continued to blossom two centuries after the murder of 'Uthmān, and despite the fact that after the first decay the Islamic state was energized again to conquer many provinces and kingdoms first by the Saljuqs and then by the Moghuls, it was during the first period which came to an end with the murder of 'Uthman that the true principles of Islamic public life were established and crystallized. Therefore, one must look to that period alone if he seeks certitude regarding these principles. Later on, despite the blossoming of knowledge and science during the Umawi and especially the 'Abbasi periods, these normative principles were tampered with and often replaced by others which did not accord with the spirit of Islam. For the most part, this was done in pursuit of political *shu'ubi* reasons. It was the insincere converts from Judaism and Christianity as well as the Persians who propagated these new principles. They had no inhibition against the fabrication of *liadiths* and their attribution to the Prophet (P.B.U.H) nor against the fabrication of tales about the early caliphs contrary to what is known of their biographies and temperament.

None of the materials which have come to us from this late period can be depended upon without the strictest scrutiny and criticism; none may be scientifically accredited without subjection to impersonal analysis, absolutely free of prejudice. The first requirement consists of referring all controversial material con-

cerning the Arab Prophet (P.B.U.H) to the Qur'ān and of discarding all that disagrees therewith. As for the rest of the period ending with the murder of 'Uthnian, scientific and critical analysis should accredit the materials that have come to us and thus enable us to use them as reference in our analysis of later materials. If we do this with scientific precision, we may gain a true picture of the genuine principles of Islam and of early Islamic life. We will grasp the mind and spirit of Islam which achieved such heights of power and vision that the Arab Bedouins who were caught by it sallied forth into the world to spread in a few decades the noblest humanism that history has ever known. Success in this task would lay bare for the benefit of humanity new horizons capable of leading it to communion with the realm of soul and spirit and the achievement of happiness and felicity, just as man's knowledge of electricity and radio and his resultant communion with the forces of nature have led to his greater enjoyment of his life on earth. Furthermore, our success in this undertaking would bring to Islam the same honor which belonged to it in its early history when the Arabs carried forth its high principles from the Peninsula to the farthest reaches of the earth.

If we are to serve truth, science and humanity, one of our foremost requirements is to deepen our study of the biography of the Arab Prophet (P.B.U.H) in order to uncover therein the guidance mankind seeks. The Qur'ān is unquestionably the truest and most reliable source for such a study. It is the book which is absolutely free of error and which no doubt can penetrate. It is the only book whose text has remained for thirteen centuries, and will remain for the rest of time, absolutely pure and unadulterated. The purity of the Qur'ānic text is and will forever remain the greatest miracle of all history. Allah the Almighty said of it:

﴿ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَٰفِظُونَ ۝٩ ﴾ سورة الحجر آية ٩

(We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption). (Al-Hijr:9)

The Qur'ān will always remain as it once was, the only miracle of Muhammad (P.B.U.H). Of all that concerns his life, that is true which accords with the Qur'ān, and that is false which does not. I have attempted to heed this principle in this elementary study as precisely as I could. In going over the first edition of this work I praise Allah and thank Him for. His guidance and pray that He will guide and provide for the continuation of the scientific study of the life of the Prophet, (P.B.U.H).

﴿ رَّبَّنَا عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ أَنَبْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴾

سورة الممتحنة آية ٤

("Our Lord! In You do we trust, and to You do we turn in repentance: to You is (our) final Return.)
(Al-Mumtahanah:4)

This edition does not differ from the second except in a few words and phrases as demanded by clarity or syntactical precision. The changes are unnoticeable except in *verbatim* comparison. Hence, there is no need to mention them.

My reticence to undertake more serious emendation of the text is not due to any judgment on my part that in its second edition the book is perfect. I do not tire of repeating here what I said in the preface to the first edition, namely, that this book is merely the beginning of scientific Islamic research in an important field. I have discussed many problems attendant upon such research in my book *Fi Manzil al Wahy* ["At the Locus of

Revelation"] written after my pilgrimage and following the traces of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) through Hijāz and Tihāmah. I therefore refer the reader to it. Preoccupied with other things during the last eight years I have not been able to pursue my study of the life of the Prophet (P.B.U.H), of his teaching, and the careers of his companions, nor to analyze in detail the general assertions of the concluding chapters of the second edition. But I hope Allah will grant me the power to do so in a separate book devoted entirely to the subject. Perhaps, after reading the conclusion of the present edition, the reader might even share this hope with me.

Finally, I thank Allah for the appreciation with which this book has been met by Muslim as well as non-Muslim readers, and for the reviews and announcements of it in the publications of East and West. I pray Him to guide those who undertake the continuation of this research that they may be capable of bringing it to its ultimate purpose of service to the truth.

1

Arabia before Islam

The Cradle of Human Civilization

The problem of the origin and development of human civilization continues to baffle the student in modern times. Scholars have long thought that Egypt was the cradle of civilization six thousand years ago and that the earlier ages consisted of a protohistory of which no scientific knowledge was possible. Today, however, archeologists have been at work in 'Iraq and Syria in the hope of discovering clues regarding the origins of the Mesopotamian and Phoenician civilizations, of establishing whether they are anterior or posterior to Egyptian civilization, and of determining the influence of one upon the other. Whatever the results of archeological research on this period of history, one fact has never been challenged by any archeological find in China or the Far East: that is the fact that the cradle of the earliest human civilization, whether in Egypt, Phoenicia, or Mesopotamia, was connected with the Mediterranean Sea. It is equally indubitable that Egypt was the first to export its civilization to Greece and Rome, and that modern civilization is very closely related to that antiquity. Whatever archeological study of the Far East may reveal concerning the civilizations of that region, it can hardly establish that any determining relationship existed between those civilizations and Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Greece. It is no more questioned whether

these ancient civilizations of the Near East were influenced by the civilization of Islam. Indeed, the latter was the only civilization which has altered its course as soon as it came into contact with them.

The world civilization of the present which is dominating the four corners of the globe is a result of the influences of the civilizations of the ancient Near East and that of Islam upon one another.

The Mediterranean and Red Sea Basins

The civilizations which sprang up several thousand years ago on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea or in proximity thereto in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Greece reached heights of achievement which elicit our wonder and admiration today, whether in the fields of science, industry, agriculture, trade, war, or any other human activity. The mainspring of all these civilizations which gave them their strength is religion. True, the figurations of this mainspring changed from the trinitarianism of ancient Egypt expressed in the myth of Osiris, Isis and Horus, and representing the continuity of life in death and resurrection and permanence through generation, to the paganism of Hellas expressed in the sensory representation of truth, goodness, and beauty. It changed, likewise, in the succeeding periods of decay and dissolution to levels where the sensory representations of Hellas became gross. Regardless of these variants, religion has remained the source which has fashioned the destiny of the world; and it plays the same role in our age. Present civilization has sometimes opposed religion, or sought to get rid of and discard it; and yet from time to time, it has inclined towards religion. On the other hand, religion has continued to court our civilization and, perhaps, one day, may even assimilate it.

In this environment where civilization has rested for thousands of years on a religious base, three well known world religions arose. Egypt saw the appearance of Moses. He was brought up and disciplined in Pharaoh's house, instructed in the unity of Divine being and taught the secrets of the universe by Pharaoh's priesthood. When Allah permitted Moses to proclaim His religion to the people, Pharaoh was proclaiming to them:

﴿ فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ ٱلْأَعْلَىٰ ﴾ سورة النازعات آية ٢٤

(Saying, "I am your Lord, most High.") (An-Nazi'at:24)

Moses contended with Pharaoh and his priesthood until he finally had to emigrate with the children of Israel to Palestine. In Palestine there appeared Jesus, the spirit and word of Allah given unto Mary. When Allah raised Jesus unto Himself,[1] his disciples preached his religion and met in the process the strongest prejudice and opposition. When Allah permitted Christianity to spread, the Emperor of Rome, [2] then sovereign of the world, converted to the new faith and adopted its cause. The Roman Empire followed, and the religion of Jesus spread through Egypt, Syria, and Greece. From Egypt it spread to Abyssinia, and for centuries it continued to grow. Whoever sought Roman protection or friendship joined the ranks of the new faith.

Christianity and Zoroastrianism

Facing this Christian religion which spread by Roman influence and power, stood the religion of Persia supported by the moral power of India and the Far East. The civilization of Egypt, extending to Phoenicia, and that of Mesopotamia had for many ages separated the East from the West and prevented any grave

confrontation of their ideologies and civilizations. The entry of Egypt and Phoenicia into Christianity dissolved this barrier and brought the Christianity of the West and the Zoroastrianism of the East face to face. For centuries East and West confronted each other without intermingling between their religions. Each felt such fear of the other party's religion that a moral barrier came to replace the old barrier provided by the ancient Near Eastern civilizations. Each was thus compelled to direct its religious expansion to its own hinterland, away from the other's territory. Despite the numerous wars they fought, each exhausted its power without being able to confront the other on the religious or civilizational level. Although Persia conquered and ruled Syria and Egypt and the approaches of Byzantium, its kings never thought of spreading their religion or of converting the Christians. On the contrary, the conquerors respected the religions of the conquered and assisted them in reconstructing the temples which war had ravished. They granted them the liberty of upholding their religious rituals. The farthest the Persians had gone in infringing on their subjects' religion was to seize the "Holy Cross" and to keep it in Persia. When the tables were turned and the Byzantines won, they took the cross back. Thus the spiritual conquests of the West were restricted to the West, and those of the East were restricted to the East. The moral barrier separated them as decisively as the geographic civilizational one had done. Spiritually speaking, the two paths were equivalent and their equivalence prevented any clash between them.

Byzantium, the Heir of Rome

This situation remained without significant change until the sixth century of the Christian Era. In the meantime, competition between the East and West Roman empires was intensified.

Rome, which had ruled the West as far as Gaul and England for many generations, and which looked proudly back to the age of Julius Caesar, began to lose its glory gradually. The glory of Byzantium was increasing and, after the dissolution of Roman power following the raids of the Vandals and their conquest of Rome itself,[3] it became in fact the only heir of the wide Roman World. Naturally, these events were not without influence on Christianity, which arose in the lap of Rome where the believers in Jesus had suffered tyranny.

Christian Sects

Christianity began to divide into various sects, and every sect began in turn to divide into factions, each of which held a different opinion concerning the religion and its principles and bases. In the absence of commonly held principles, in terms of which these differences could be composed, the various sects became antagonistic toward one another. Their moral and mental backwardness transformed the opposing doctrines into personal antagonisms protected by blind prejudice and deadening conservatism. Some of them denied that Jesus ever had a body other than a ghostly shadow by which he appeared to men. Others regarded the person and soul of Jesus as related to each other with such extraordinary ties that only the most fastidious imagination could grasp what they meant. While some worshiped Mary, others denied that she remained a virgin after the birth of Christ. Thus the controversies dividing the followers of Jesus were typical of the dissolution and decadence affecting any nation or age; that is to say, they were merely verbal disputes arising from the assignment to words of secret and esoteric meanings removed from their commonsense connotations, oppugnant to reason and tolerated only by futile sophistry.

One of the monks of the Church wrote describing the situation of his day: "The city and all its precincts were full of controversy-in the market place, in the shops of apparel, at the changers, in the grocery stores. You ask for a piece of gold to be changed at the changer's and you find yourself questioned about that which in the person of Jesus was created and that which was not created. You stop at the bakery to buy a loaf of bread and ask concerning the price, only to find the baker answer: 'Will you agree that the Father is greater than the Son and the Son is subordinate to the Father?' You ask your servant about your bath, whether or not the water is warm, and your servant answers you: 'The Son was created from nothing.'

The decay which befell Christianity and caused it to split into factions and sects did not shake the political foundations of the Imperium Romanum. The Empire remained strong and closely knit while the sects disputed their differences with one another and with the councils which were called from time to time to resolve them. For some time at least no sect had enough power to coerce the others into agreement. The Empire protected them all and granted them the freedom to argue their Doctrines with one another, a measure which increased the civil power of the Emperor without reducing his religious prestige. Each faction sought his sympathy and encouragement; indeed, each claimed that the emperor was its patron and advocate. It was the cohesion of the Empire which enabled Christianity to spread to the farthest reaches of imperial authority. From its base in Roman Egypt, Christianity thus reached to independent Abyssinia and thence to the Red Sea which it then invested with the same importance as the Mediterranean. The same imperial cohesion also enabled Christianity to move from Syria and Palestine once it had converted their people to the adjoining Arab tribe of Ghassan and the shores of the Euphrates. There it converted the Arabs of Hirah, the Banū Lakhm, and Banū Mundhir who had migrated thence from the barren desert but whose history has been divided

between independence and Persian tutelage.

The Decay of Zoroastrianism

In Persia, Zoroastrianism was attacked by the same kind of decay. Although fire worship continued to give the various factions a semblance of unity, the religion and its followers divided into sects which contended with one another. Apparently unaffected by the religious controversy around the divine personifications and the meanings behind them,

The political structure of the land remained strong. All sects sought the protection of the Persian emperor, and the latter readily gave it to them if only to increase his own power and to use them one against the other wherever a political gain for him was to be made or a political threat from any one section was to be avoided. The two powers, Christianity and Zoroastrianism, the West and the East, each allied with a number of smaller states which it held under its influence, surrounded the Arabian Peninsula at the beginning of the sixth century C.E. Each entertained its own ideas of colonialism and expansion. In each camp, the men of religion exerted great efforts to spread the faith and doctrine in which they believed. This proselytizing notwithstanding, the Arabian Peninsula remained secure against conquest except at the fringes. Like a strong fortress it was secure against the spread of any religious call, whether Christian or Zoroastrian. Only very few of its tribes had answered the call, and they did so in insignificant numbers— a surprising phenomenon in history. To understand it we must grasp the situation and nature of Arabia and the influence that nature had exerted upon the lives, morals and thought of its people.

The Geographic Position of the Peninsula

The Arabian Peninsula has the shape of an irregular rectangle. On the north it is bounded by Palestine and the Syrian desert; on the east by the kingdom of al Hirah, the Euphrates and Tigris and the Persian Gulf; on the south by the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of 'Adan; and to the west by the Red Sea. The natural isolation of the Peninsula combined with its size to protect it against invasion. The Peninsula is over a thousand kilometers long and as wide. Moreover, this vast expanse is utterly uncultivable. It does not have a single river nor a dependable rainy season around which any agriculture could be organized. With the exception of fertile and rainy Yaman in the southwest, the Peninsula consists of plateaus, valleys and deserts devoid of vegetation and an atmosphere so inclement that no civilization could prosper therein. The Arabian Peninsula allows only desert life; and desert life demands continuous movement, adoption of the camel as means of transportation, and the pursuit of thin pasture which is no sooner discovered than it is exhausted and another movement becomes imperative. These well sought-after pastures grow around springs whose waters have collected from rainfall on the surrounding rocky terrain, allowing a scarce vegetation to grow in the immediate vicinity.

Except Yaman the Arabian Peninsula Is Unknown

In a country such as this, or such as the Sahara of Africa, it is natural that no people would seek to dwell and that it have a scarce population. It is equally natural that whoever settles in such a desert has done so for the sake of the refuge the desert provides and that he entertains no purpose beyond survival. The inhabitants of the oasis, on the other hand, may envision a different purpose. But the oases themselves remain unknown to any but the most daring adventurer prepared to venture into the desert at the risk of his own life. Except for Yaman, the Arabian

Peninsula was literally unknown to the ancient world.

The geographic position of the Peninsula saved it from depopulation. In those ancient times, men had not yet mastered navigation and had not yet learned to cross the sea with the confidence requisite for travel or commerce. The Arabic proverbs which have come down to us betray the fact that men feared the sea as they feared death. Trade and commerce had to find another road less dangerous than the sea. The most important trade route was that which extended from the Roman Empire and other territories in the west to India and other territories in the east. The Arabian Peninsula stood astride the two roads connecting East and West, whether by way of Egypt or by way of the Persian Gulf. Its inhabitants and masters, namely the Bedouins, naturally became princes of the desert routes just as the maritime people became princes of the sea lanes when sea communications replaced land communications. It was equally natural that the princes of the desert would plan the roads of caravans so as to guarantee the maximum degree of safety, just as the sea navigators were to plan the course of ships away from tempests, and other sea dangers. "The course of the caravan," says Heeren, "was not a matter of free choice, but of established custom. In the vast steppes of sandy desert which the caravans had to cross, nature had sparingly allotted to the traveler a few scattered places of rest where, under the shade of palm trees and beside cool fountains, the merchant and his beast of burden might refresh themselves. Such places of repose became *entrepats* of commerce and, not infrequently, sites of temples and sanctuaries under the protection of which the merchant pursued his trade and to which the pilgrim resorted."

The Two Caravan Routes

The Arabian Peninsula was criss-crossed with caravan routes. Of these, two were important. The first ran alongside the

Persian Gulf, then alongside the Tigris[5] and then crossed the Syrian desert towards Palestine. It was properly called "the eastern route." The other route ran along the shore of the Red Sea and was properly called "the western route." On these two main routes, world trade ran between East and West carrying products and goods in both directions. These two routes provided the desert with income and prosperity. The peoples of the West, however, lived in total ignorance of the routes which their own trade took. None of them, or of their eastern neighbors, ever penetrated the desert territory—unless it be the case of an adventurer who had no concern for his own life.

A number of adventurers perished in trying the desert labyrinth in vain. The hardships which such travel entailed were unbearable except to those who had been accustomed to desert life from a tender age. A man accustomed to the luxuries of town living cannot be expected to bear the discomfort of these barren mountains separated from the Red Sea only by the narrow passages of Tihamah, and leading through naked rocks to the apparently infinite expanse of most arid and desolate desert. A man accustomed to a political order guaranteeing the security of all inhabitants at all times cannot be expected to bear the terror and lawlessness of the desert, devoid as it is of political order, and whose inhabitants live as utterly independent tribes, clans—nay individuals—except where their relations to one another come under the jurisdiction of tribal law, or some *ad hoc* convention of a strong protector. The desert had never known any urban order such as we enjoy in our modern cities. Its people lived in the shadow of retributive justice. They repelled attack by attack, and they sought to prevent aggression by the fear of counteraggressions. The weak had no chance unless somebody took them under protection. Such a life does not encourage anyone to try it, nor does it invite anyone to learn of it in any detail. That is why the Arabian Peninsula remained an unknown continent throughout the world until the circumstances of history permitted its people, after the advent of Muhammad (P.B.U.H)

to migrate and thus tell about their country and give the world the information it lacked.

The Civilization of Yaman

The only exception to this universal ignorance of the Arabian Peninsula concerns Yaman and the coast line of the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea. This exception is not due merely to their near location to the sea and ocean but to their radical difference from the rest of the Arabian Peninsula. Rather than being a barren desert profitless to befriend, explore, or colonize, these lands were fertile and had well-defined seasons with a fair amount of rainfall. They had an established civilization with many urban centers and long-lasting temples. Its people, the Banū Himyar, were well-endowed and intelligent. They were clever enough to think of ways of saving rain water from running down to the sea and of making good use of it. They built the dam of Ma'rib and thereby changed the course which water would have naturally followed to courses such as settled life and intensive agriculture required. Falling on high mountains, rain water would gather in a 400 meters wide valley flanked by two mountains east of the city of Ma'rib. It would then divide into many streams and spread over a wide plain that is very much like the Nile in the dam area in Upper Egypt. As their technological and administrative skill developed, the people of Yaman constructed a dam at the narrowest point between the two mountains with gates which allowed controlled distribution of water. By putting the resources of their country to good use, they increased the fertility of the land and the prosperity of the people. What has so far been discovered— and is still being discovered—by way of remains of this Himyari civilization in Yaman, proves that it had reached an impressive height and was strong enough to withstand not only a number of great political storms but even war.

Judaism and Christianity in Yaman

This civilization, founded upon agricultural prosperity and settled life, brought upon Yaman great misfortune, unlike the desert whose barrenness was for it a sort of protector. Sovereigns in their own land, Banu Himyar ruled Yaman generation after generation. One of their kings, Dhū Nuwās, disliked the paganism of his people and inclined toward the Mosaic religion. In time, he was converted to this faith by the Jews who had migrated to Yaman. Historians agree that it was to this Himyari king~ that the Qur'ān referred in the "story of the trench," reported in the following verses:

﴿ قُتِلَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلْأُخْدُودِ ٱلنَّارِ ذَاتِ ٱلْوَقُودِ إِذْ هُمْ عَلَيْهَا قُعُودٌ وَهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَفْعَلُونَ بِٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ وَمَا نَقَمُوا۟ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّآ أَن يُؤْمِنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ ٱلْعَزِيزِ ٱلْحَمِيدِ ﴿٨﴾ ﴾ سورة البروج الآيات ٤ـ ٨

(Woe to the makers of the pit (of fire), Fire supplied (abundantly) with Fuel: Behold! They sat over against the (fire), And they witnessed (all) that they were doing against the Believers. And they ill-treated them for no other reason than that they believed in Allah, Exalted in Power, Worthy of all Praise!) (Al-Buruj: 4-8)

The story is that of a pious Christian, Qaymiyan by name, who emigrated from Byzantium, settled in Najrān, and converted the people of that city by his piety, virtue, and good example. When the news of the increasing converts and widening influence of Christianity reached Dhū Nuwās, he went to Najran and solemnly warned the people that they must either convert to

Judaism or be killed. Upon their refusal to apostasize, the king dug a wide trench, set it on fire, and threw them in. Whoever escaped from the fire was killed by the sword. According to the biographies, twenty thousand of them perished in this manner. Some nonetheless escaped, sought the Byzantine Emperor Justinian and asked for his help against Dhū Nuwās. Byzantium was too far from Yaman to send any effective assistance. Its emperor therefore wrote to the Negus of Abyssinia to avenge the Christians of Yaman. At the time-the sixth century C.E.-Abyssinia was at the height of its power, commanding a wide sea trade protected by a strong maritime fleet and imposing its influence upon the neighboring countries. The Abyssinian kingdom was the ally of the Byzantine Empire and the protagonist of Christianity on the Red Sea just as the Byzantine Empire was its protagonist on the Mediterranean. When the Negus received the message of the Byzantine emperor, he sent with the Yamani, who carried the emperor's message to him, an Abyssinian army under the command of Aryät. One of the officers of this expeditionary force was Abraha al Ashram; Aryat conquered Yaman and ruled it in the name of the Negus of Abyssinia. Later on he was killed and succeeded by Abraha, "the general with the elephant," who sought to conquer Makkah and destroy the Ka'bah but failed, as we shall see in the next chapter.

The successors of Abraha ruled Yaman tyrannically. Seeking relief from the yoke the Himyari Sayf ibn Dhū Yazan approached the Byzantine emperor complaining against the Abyssinians and pleading for a Byzantine governor to be sent to establish justice. He was turned down because of the alliance between Byzantium and Abyssinia. Disappointed, he stopped on his way back at the court of Nu'mān ibn al Mundhir, Viceroy of Chosroes for al Hirah and surrounding lands of 'Iraq.

Conquest and Rule of Yaman by Persia

When al Nu'man entered the audience hail of Chosroes, he was accompanied by Sayf ibn Dhū Yazan. Chosroes received them at his winter residence, sitting on the throne of Darius in the great *iwan* decorated with the pictures of the Zodiac. The throne was surrounded with a curtain made of the most precious furs which served as background for golden and silver chandeliers filled with warm water and for his golden and silver crown filled with rubies, beryls and pearls which, being too heavy to rest on his head, was attached to the ceiling by a golden chain. His clothes were of a golden weave, and he decorated himself with gold. So brilliant was this spectacle that any person was seized with awe at the mere sight of it. Surely, such was the case of Sayf ibn Dhu Yazan. When he came back to himself and felt reassured, he was asked by Chosroes about his mission and told the emperor the story of Abyssinia's conquest and tyrannous rule. Chosroes hesitated at the beginning, but then decided to send to Yaman an army under the command of Wahriz, one of the noblest and bravest commanders of Persia. The Persian army arrived in Yaman, vanquished the Abyssinians and expelled them after a rule of seventy-two years. Yaman remained under Persian rule until the advent of Islam and the succeeding entry of all Arab countries into the religion of Allah as well as into the Islamic Empire.

Cyrus's Rule of Persia

The Persians who ruled Yaman did not come directly under the authority of the Persian Emperor, particularly after Cyrus had killed his father Chosroes and succeeded to his throne. The new emperor seemed to think that the whole world ran according to his wishes and that the kingdoms of the world existed only to fill his treasury and to increase his affluence and luxury. Because he was a young man, he neglected most of the affairs of state in

order to devote himself to his pleasures and pastimes. The pageantry of his hunting trips was greater than any imagination could possibly conceive. He used to go out surrounded by a whole troop of youthful princes clad in red, yellow, and violet; carriers of falcons and servants held back their muzzled panthers, perfume-carrying slaves, fly-fighters and musicians. In order to give himself a feeling of spring in the midst of winter, he used to sit surrounded by the members of his house on an immense carpet on which were drawn the roads and highways of the kingdom, the orchards, and gardens full of flowers, the forests and greenwoods and the silvery rivers-all in a state of blossoming spring. Despite Cyrus's extravagance and addiction to pleasure, Persia maintained its glory and strong resistance to Byzantium and prevented the spread of Christianity further east. It was clear, however, that the accession of Cyrus to the throne was the beginning of the decline of this empire and a preparation for its conquest by the Muslims and the spread of Islam therein.

Destruction of the Dam of Ma'rib

The conflict of which Yaman had been the theatre ever since the fourth century C.E. influenced the distribution of population in the Arabian Peninsula. It is told that the dam of Ma'rib, by means of which the Himyaris changed the course of nature to benefit their country, was destroyed by the great flood, ***"Sayl al 'A rim,"*** with the result that large sections of the inhabitants had to migrate. Apparently the continuing political conflicts so distracted men and governments from attending to the repair and maintenance of the dam that when the flood came it was incapable of holding the water. It is also told that the shift in population was due to the fact that the Byzantine emperor, realizing the threat to his trade by the conflict with Persia over Yaman, built a fleet of ships to ply the Red Sea and thereby avoid the caravan routes of Arabia. Historians agree on the historicity of the

immigration of the Azd tribes from Yaman to the north but disagree in explaining it. Some attribute it to the loss of trade, and others to the destruction of the dam of Ma'rib and the resultant loss in food production. Whatever the explanation, the historicity of the event is beyond doubt. It was at the root of the blood relation of the Yamanis with the northern Arabs and their involvement in the history of the north. Even today the problem is still far from solved.

The Social Order of the Peninsula

As we have just seen, the political order of Yaman was disturbed because of the geographic circumstances of that country and the political wars of conquest of which it had been the object. ***Per contra,*** the Arabian Peninsula was free from any such disturbances. Indeed, the political system known in Yaman, as well as any other political system whatever the term may mean or may have meant to the civilized peoples of old-was literally unknown in the areas of Tihāmah, Hijaz, Najd, and other wide spaces constituting the Arabian Peninsula. The sons of the desert were then, as most of them are today, nomads who had no taste for settled life and who knew no kind of permanence other than perpetual movement in search of pasture and satisfaction of the wish of the moment. In the desert, the basic unit of life is not the state but the tribe. Moreover, a tribe which is always on the move does not know of any universal law nor does it ever subject itself to any general political order. To the nomad, nothing is acceptable that falls short of total freedom for the individual, for the family, and for the tribe as a whole. Settled land farmers, on the other hand, agree to give up part of their freedom, whether to the group as a whole or to an absolute ruler, in exchange for peace, security, and the prosperity which order brings. But the desert man who disdains the prosperity and security of settled life and derides the comforts of urban living

cannot give any of his freedom for such "gains." Neither does he accept anything short of absolute equality with all the members of his tribe as well as between his tribe and other tribes. Naturally, he is moved like all other men by the will to survive and to defend himself, but such will must accord with the principles of honor and integrity demanded by the free life of the desert. Therefore, the desert people have never suffered with patience any injustice inflicted upon them but resisted it with all their strength. If they cannot throw off the injustice imposed upon them, they give up the pasture and move out into the wide expanse of the desert. Nothing is easier for them than recourse to the sword whenever a conflict seems insoluble under the conventional desert rules of honor, nobility, and integrity. It was these very conditions of desert living which led to the cultivation and growth of the virtues of hospitality, bravery, mutual assistance, neighbor protection, and magnanimity. It is not by accident that these virtues are stronger and more popular in the desert and weaker and more scarce in the cities. For the above mentioned economic reasons neither Byzantium nor Persia entertained any ideas of conquering the Arabian Peninsula with the exception of Yaman. For they know that the people of the Peninsula would prefer emigration to the life of subjection and that they would never yield to any established authority or order.

These nomadic characteristics influenced in large measure the few small towns which grew up in the Peninsula along the caravan routes. To these centers the traders used to come in order to rest. In them they found temples wherein to give thanks to the gods for bringing them safely through their travels and for safeguarding their goods while in transit. Such were Makkah, Tā'if, Yathrib, and others scattered between the mountains of the west coastland and the desert sands. In their order and organization these towns followed the pattern and laws of the desert. Indeed, their being closer to the desert than they were to civilized life was reflected in the system of their tribes and clans, in their

morals and customs, and in their strong resistance to any imposition upon their freedom, despite the fact that settled life had somewhat restricted their movements in comparison with their desert cousins. We shall witness more of this in the coming chapters when we talk about Makkah and Yathrib.

Arab Paganism and Its Causes

This state of nature and the moral, political, and social order it implied were equally consequential for religion. Was Yaman influenced by Byzantine Christianity or Persian Zoroastrianism, and did it influence in turn the Arabian Peninsula? It would seem so, especially in the case of Christianity. The missionaries of Christianity were as active in those days as they are today. Moreover, unlike the life of the city, desert life is especially conducive to the rise of religious consciousness. In the desert, man is in constant touch with the universe as a whole. He senses the infinity of existence in all its forms and is thereby prompted to order his relationship with the infinite. The city man, on the other hand, is distracted from the consciousness of infinity by his constant occupation. He is protected from the ***angst*** and dread such consciousness of the infinite brings by the group to which he gave up part of his freedom. His submission to political authority and the consequent security arising from this submission prevent him from establishing a direct contact, beyond the civil power, with the spiritual powers of the world, and weaken his speculative thinking about them. In the case of the desert man, on the other hand, nothing impedes his speculation over religious meanings and problems to which the life of the desert naturally leads.

And now we may ask, did Christianity, with all its missionary activity, benefit from these circumstances to spread and propagate itself? Perhaps it would have done so had it not

been that other factors went into play and enabled the Peninsula as a whole to preserve its paganism, the religion of its ancestors. Only a very few tribes therefore responded favorably to the Christian call.

Christianity and Judaism

The greatest civilization of the day stood in the basins of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. The religions of Christianity and Judaism divided this civilization, and though they were not at war with each other, they were surely not friendly to each other. The Jews then remembered, as they still do, the rebellion Jesus had launched against their religion. As much as they could, therefore, they worked secretly to stop the flow of Christianity, the religion which forced them out of the Promised Land and assumed the Roman color as its own throughout the Empire. There were large communities of Jews living in Arabia, and a good number of them had settled in Yaman and in Yathrib. Zoroastrianism, on the other hand, was anxious to prevent Christianity from crossing the Euphrates. Hence, it lent its moral support to paganism while overlooking, or being mindful of, its spiritual and moral degradation. The fall of Rome and the passing of its power under all forms of dissolution encouraged the multiplication of sects in Christianity. These were not only becoming numerous and varied but were also fighting desperately with one another. Indeed, the Christian sects fell from the high level of faith to that of controversy regarding forms, figures, and words which related to the holiness of Mary and her priority to her son, the Christ. The sectarian controversies of Christianity betray the level of degradation and decay to which Christian thought and practice had sunk. It takes a truly decadent mind to discard content in favor of external form, to attach so much importance

to externalities that the essence disappears under their opaque weight. And that is precisely what the Christian sects did.

The subjects under controversy varied from place to place; the Christians of al Sham[1]' disputed other questions than those of Hirah or Abyssinia. In their contact with the Christians, the Jews did nothing to calm the raging controversies or to temper the generated antagonism. The Arabs, on the other hand, were on good terms with the Christians of Damascus and Yaman with whom they came into contact during the winter and summer caravan trips, as well as with the Abyssinian Christians who visited them from time to time. It was natural for them to refrain from taking sides with any Christian party against another. The Arabs were happy with their paganism, contented to follow in the footsteps of their ancestors, and prepared to leave both Christians and Jews alone as long as these were not interfering with their religion. Thus, idol worship continued to flourish among them and even spread to the centers inhabited by their Christian and Jewish neighbors, namely Najrān and Yathrib. The Jews of Yathrib tolerated idol worship, co-existed with it, and finally befriended it as the trade routes linked them to the pagan Arabs with mutually beneficial relations.

The Spread of Paganism

Perhaps the desperate struggle of the Christian sects against one another was not the sole cause of why the Arabs remained pagan. Varieties of paganism were still adhered to even by the people who had converted to Christianity. Egyptian and Greek paganism was quite apparent in the ideologies and practices of many Christian sects. Indeed, they were apparent in some of the views of orthodox Christianity itself. The school of Alexandria and its philosophy still enjoyed a measure of influence, though it was naturally reduced from that which it enjoyed during the time

of the Ptolemies, at the beginning of the Christian Era. At any rate, this influence was deeply imbedded in the consciousness of the people, and its brilliant logic, though sophistic in nature, still exercised appeal for a polytheistic paganism of human deities so close and lovable to man. It seems to me that polytheism has been the strongest appeal of paganism to weak souls in all times and places. The weak soul is by nature incapable of rising high enough to establish a contact with total being and, in a supreme moment of consciousness, to grasp the unity of total being represented in that which is greater than all that exists, in Allah, the Lord of Majesty. The weak soul therefore stops at one of the differentiated phenomena of total being, like the sun or the moon or the fire, and awkwardly withdraws from rising beyond it to the unity of being itself.

What poverty of spirit characterizes those souls who arrested by their grasp of a confused, insignificant little meaning of total being in an idol, commune with that object and wrap it with a halo of sanctity! We still witness this phenomenon in many countries of the world despite all the claims this modern world makes for its advances in science and civilization. Such is what the visitors see at St. Peter's cathedral in Rome where the foot of a statue of a certain saint is physically worn out by the kisses which the saint's worshipers proffer to it, so that the church has to change it for a new foot every now and then. If we could keep this in mind, we would excuse those Arabs whom God had not yet guided to the true faith. We would be less quick to condemn them for their continued idolatry and following in the footsteps of their ancestors when we remember that they were the witnesses of a desperate struggle of Christian neighbors against one another who had not yet liberated themselves completely from paganism. How can we not excuse them when pagan conditions are still with us and seem to be inextricably rooted in the world? How can we not excuse the pre-Islamic Arabs when paganism is still evident in the idolatrous practices of so many Muslims of

the present world despite the fact that Islam, the one unflinching enemy of paganism that had once succeeded in sweeping away every other worship besides that of Allah, the Lord of majesty, is their professed religion?

Idol Worship

In their worship of idols, the Arabs followed many ways difficult for the modern researcher to discover and understand. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) destroyed the idols in side the Ka'bah and commanded his companions to destroy all idols wherever they might be. After they destroyed the idols' physical existence, the Muslims launched a campaign against the very mention of idols and sought to wipe them out from history, literature, and, indeed, from consciousness itself. The evidence the Qur'ān gives for the existence of idolatry in pre-Islamic times as well as the stories which circulated in the second century A.H. concerning idolatrous practices, prove that idolatry once enjoyed a position of tremendous importance. The same evidence proves that it was of many kinds, that idolatrous practices were of great variety and that idols differed widely in the degree of sacralization conferred upon them. Every tribe had a different idol which it worshiped. Generally, objects of worship belonged to three genres: metal and wooden statues, stone statues, and shapeless masses of stone which one tribe or another consecrated because its origin was thought to be heavenly, whereas in reality it was only a piece of volcanic or meteoric rock. The most finely made statues were those which belonged to Yaman. No wonder, for the Yamanis were more advanced in technology than the people of Hijāz, Najd, or Kindah. The classical works on pre-Islamic idols, however, did not report to us that any fine statues existed anywhere, except perhaps what they reported concerning Hubal, namely that it was made out of carnelian in the likeness of man,

that its arm once broke off and was replaced by another contributed by Quraysh and made of solid gold. Hubal was the greatest member of the Arab pantheon and resided in Makkah, inside the Ka'bah. Pilgrims came to its shrine from all corners. Still unsatisfied by these great idols to which they prayed and offered sacrifices, the Arabs used to adopt other statues or sacred stones for domestic worship and devotion. They used to circumambulate the "holy" precincts of these gods both before leaving on a trip and upon returning home. They often carried their idols with them when they traveled, presuming that the idol had permitted its worshiper to travel. All these statues, whether in the Ka'bah, around it or scattered around the tribes or the provinces, were regarded as intermediaries between their worshipers and the supreme god. They regarded the worship of them as a means of rapprochement with God even though in reality that same worship had caused them to forget the true worship of Allah.

Makkah's status in Arabia

Despite the fact that Yaman was the most advanced province in the Arabian Peninsula and the most civilized on account of its fertility and the sound administration of its water resources, its religious practices never commanded the respect of the inhabitants of the desert. Its temples never constituted a single center of pilgrimage. Makkah, on the other hand, and its Ka'bah, the house of Isma'il, was the object of pilgrimage ever since Arab history began. Every Arab sought to travel to it. In it the Holy Months were observed with far more ado than anywhere else. For this reason, as well as for its distinguished position in the trade of the Peninsula as a whole, it was regarded as the capital. Further, it was to be the birthplace of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), the Arab Prophet (P.B.U.H), and became the object of the yearning

of the world throughout the centuries. Its ancient house was to remain holy forever. The tribe of Quraysh was to continue to enjoy a distinguished and sovereign position. All this was to remain so forever despite the fact that the Makkans and their city continued to lead a life closer to the hardness of Bedouin existence which had been their custom for many tens of centuries.

2

Makkah, the Ka'bah and the Quraysh

Geographic Position of Makkah

About eighty kilometers east of the shore of the Red Sea a number of mountain chains run from north to south paralleling the shore line and dovetailing with the caravan route between Yaman and Palestine. These chains would completely enclose a small plain, were it not for three main outlets connecting it with the road to Yaman, the road to the Red Sea close to the port town of Juddah and the road leading to Palestine. In this plain surrounded by mountains on all sides stands Makkah. It is difficult to trace its origins. In all likelihood these origins lie thousands of years in the past. It is certain that even before Makkah was built the valley on which it stands must have been used as a resting point for the caravan routes. Its number of water springs made it a natural stopping point for the caravans going south to Yaman as well as for those going north to Palestine. Ismā'il, son of Ibrahim, was probably the first one to dwell there permanently and establish it as a permanent settlement after it had long been a resting station for transient caravans and a marketplace in which the north-bound and south-bound travelers exchanged their goods.

Granted that Isma'Il was the first to make of Makkah a Permanent habitat, the history of the city before Isma'il is rather obscure. Perhaps it can be said that Makkah was used as a place of worship even before Isma'il had migrated there. The story of the latter's migration to Makkah demands that we summarize the story of his father, Ibrahim—may Allah's peace be upon him. Ibrahim was born in 'Iraq to a father whose occupation was carpentry and the making and selling of statues for worship. As Ibrahim grew up and observed his father making these statues out of pieces of wood, he was struck by his people's worship and consecration of them. He doubted these deities and was troubled by his doubt. One day he asked his father to explain how he could worship that which his hand had wrought. Unsatisfied by his father's answer, Ibrahim talked about his doubts to his friends, and soon the father began to fear the consequences for the security of his son as well as for his own trade. Ibrahim, however, respected his own reason too much to silence its voice. Accordingly, he sought to convince his people of the futility of idol-worship with argument and proof. Once he seized the opportunity of the absence of worshipers from the temple and destroyed all the statues of the gods but that of the principal deity. When he was accused in public of this crime he was asked as the the Holy Qur'an said:

﴿ قَالُوٓاْ ءَأَنتَ فَعَلْتَ هَـٰذَا بِـَٔالِهَتِنَا يَـٰٓإِبْرَٰهِيمُ ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهُۥ كَبِيرُهُمْ هَـٰذَا فَسْـَٔلُوهُمْ إِن كَانُواْ يَنطِقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ ﴾

سورة الأنبياء الآيتان ٦٢-٦٣

(They said, "Art you the one that did this with our gods, O Abraham?" He said: "Nay, this was done by, this is their

biggest one! Ask them, if they can talk.)

(Al Anbiyaa:62-63)

Ibrahim's destruction of the idols came after he had long pondered the error of idol worship and searched earnestly for a worthier object of devotion.

﴿ فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ ٱلَّيْلُ رَءَا كَوْكَبًا ۖ قَالَ هَٰذَا رَبِّى ۖ فَلَمَّآ أَفَلَ قَالَ لَآ أُحِبُّ ٱلْءَافِلِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَلَمَّا رَءَا ٱلْقَمَرَ بَازِغًا قَالَ هَٰذَا رَبِّى ۖ فَلَمَّآ أَفَلَ قَالَ لَئِن لَّمْ يَهْدِنِى رَبِّى لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلضَّآلِّينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ فَلَمَّا رَءَا ٱلشَّمْسَ بَازِغَةً قَالَ هَٰذَا رَبِّى هَٰذَآ أَكْبَرُ ۖ فَلَمَّآ أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يَٰقَوْمِ إِنِّى بَرِىٓءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ إِنِّى وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِىَ لِلَّذِى فَطَرَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا ۖ وَمَآ أَنَا۠ مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾ ﴾

(الأنعام ٧٦- ٧٩)

(When the night covered him over, he saw a star: he said: "This is my Lord." But when it set, he said: "I love not those that set." When he saw the moon rising in splendour, he said: "This is my Lord." But when the moon set, he said: "Unless my Lord guide me, I shall surely be among those who go astray." When he saw the sun rising in splendour, he said: "This is my Lord; this is the greatest (of all)." But when the sun set, he said: "O my people! I am indeed free from your (guilt) of giving partners to Allah. "For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to Allah.") (Al-An'am: 76-79)

Ibrahim and Sarah in Egypt

Ibrahim did not succeed in liberating his people from paganism. On the contrary, they punished him by throwing him into the fire. Allah rescued him by allowing him to run away to Palestine together with his wife, Sarah. From Palestine he moved on to Egypt, which was then ruled by the Hyksos or Amalekite kings. Sarah was a beautiful lady, and as the Hyksos kings were in the habit of taking into their households any beautiful married women they met, Ibrahim therefore pretended that Sarah was his sister and hence unmarried so that the king might not take her away and kill him in the process. The king, however, did take her and later realized that she was married. He returned her to Ibrahim, blamed him for his lie, and gave him a number of gifts, one of which was a slave girl by the name of Hāgar. As Sarah remained barren after many years of married life, she urged her husband to go into Hagar. After Ibrahim did so, Hagar soon bore him his son Isma'Il. Later on, after Isma'il became a youth, Sarah bore a son who was called Ishaq.

Who Was the Sacrificial Son?

Historians of this period disagree on the matter of Ibrahim's sacrifice of Isma'il. Did the event take place before the birth of Ishaq or thereafter? Did it take place in Palestine or in the Hijaz? Jewish historians insist that the sacrificial son was Ishaq, not Isma'il. This is not the place to analyze this issue. In his book *Qisas al Anbiyā'*, Shaykh 'Abd al Wahhāb al Najjār concluded that the sacrificial son was Isma'il. His evidence was drawn from the Qur'ān itself where the sacrificial son is described as being Ibrahim's unique son, which could only be Isma'il, and only as long as Ishaq was not yet born. For with the birth of Ishaq, Ibrahim would have no "unique" son but two, Isma'il and Ishaq.

But to accede to this evidence implies that the sacrifice should have taken place in Palestine. This would equally be true in case the sacrificial son was Ishaq, for the latter remained with his mother Sarah in Palestine and never left for the Hijaz. On the other hand, the report which makes the sacrifice take place on the mountain of Mina near Makkah identifies the sacrificial son as Isma'il. The Qur'ān did not mention the name of the sacrificial son, and hence Muslim historians disagree in this regard.

The Qur'dnic Version of the Sacrifice

The story of the sacrifice is that Ibrahim saw in a dream Allah commanding him to sacrifice his son to Him. In the morning he took his son and went out to fulfill the command.

﴿ فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ ٱلسَّعْىَ قَالَ يَٰبُنَىَّ إِنِّىٓ أَرَىٰ فِى ٱلْمَنَامِ أَنِّىٓ أَذْبَحُكَ فَٱنظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَىٰ ۚ قَالَ يَٰٓأَبَتِ ٱفْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ ۖ سَتَجِدُنِىٓ إِن شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ مِنَ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ فَلَمَّآ أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُۥ لِلْجَبِينِ وَنَٰدَيْنَٰهُ أَن يَٰٓإِبْرَٰهِيمُ قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ ٱلرُّءْيَآ ۚ إِنَّا كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِى ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَهُوَ ٱلْبَلَٰٓؤُا۟ ٱلْمُبِينُ وَفَدَيْنَٰهُ بِذِبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾ ﴾ سورة الصافات الآيات ١٠٢-١٠٧

(Then, when (the son) reached (the age of) (serious) work with him, he said: "O my son! I have seen in a dream that I offer you in sacrifice: now see what is your view!" (The son) said: "O my father! Do as you are commanded: you will find me, if Allah so wills, one of the steadfast. So

when they had both submitted (to Allah), and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead (for sacrifice), We called out to him, "O Abraham!"you have already fulfilled the dream!" thus indeed do We reward those who do right.For this was a clear trial, And We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice) (As-Saffat:102-107)

The Historians' Version

Some historians tell this story in more dramatic way. The beauty of some versions justifies a brief pause despite the fact that the story itself does not belong in this *aperçu* of Makkan history. It is told, for instance, that when Ibrahim saw in his dream that he should sacrifice his son and ascertained that, that was Allah's commandment, he asked his son to take a rope and a knife and to go ahead of him to a nearby hill in order to collect some wood for fuel. The boy complied with his father's request. Satan took the guise of a man, came to Isma'il's mother and said:

"Do you know where Ibrahim is taking your son? " She answered: "Yes, they both went to collect some wood." Satan said: "By Allah, he did not take him except to sacrifice him." The mother answered, "Not at all! His father is even more loving and gentler to him than me." Satan said: "But he claims that Allah has commanded him to do so." The mother answered: "If Allah has thus commanded him then so let it be." Thus Satan lost the first round. He ran to the son as he was following his father and repeated to him tile same temptations he offered to his mother. But the son answered in exactly the same way as his mother did. Satan then approached Ibrahim and told him that what he saw in his dream was only a satanic illusion that he may kill his son and grieve thereat the rest of his days. Ibrahim dismissed him and cursed him. Iblis (Satan) returned maddened and frustrated at his

failure to dissuade Ibrahlm, his wife, and his son from fulfillment of Allah's command. The same story tellers also report that Ibrahim divulged his dream to his son and asked for his opinion. They report the son as answering: "0 father, do what you are commanded to do." A still more fanciful version of the story reports the son as saying: "0 father, if you want to kill me, then bind me tight that I may not move and splatter you with my blood and thus reduce my own reward for the fulfillment of Allah's command. I know that death is hard, and I am not certain I will stay still when it comes. Therefore sharpen your blade that you may finish me quickly. Lay me face down rather than on my side, for I fear that if you were to witness my face as you cut my throat you would be moved by compassion for me and fail to complete that which Allah had asked you to do. And if you see fit to return my shirt to my mother that she may remember me therewith and, perhaps, find some consolation, please do so.' Ibrahim answered: 'My son, you are the best help in the fulfillment of Allah's command.' As he prepared for the sacrifice, bound the child, and laid him down, Ibrahim was called to stop. For he had given evidence of his obedience to Allah's command, and the son was ransomed with a sheep which Ibrahim found close by and which he killed and burnt."

That is the story of the sacrifice. It is the story of submission to Allah and His decree as well as of the fulfillment of His commandment.

Ibrahim, accompanied Isma'il, and Hagar' to the Valley of Makkah

Ishāq grew up in the company of his brother Isma'il. The father loved both equally, but Sarah was not pleased with this equation of her son with the son of the slave girl Hagar. Once, upon seeing Isma'il chastising his younger brother, she swore

that she would not live with Hāgar nor her son. Ibrahim realized that happiness was not possible as long as the two women lived in the same household; hence, he took Hagar and her son and traveled south until they arrived to the valley of Makkah. As we said earlier, the valley was a midway place of rest for caravans on the road between Yaman and al Sham. The caravans came in season, and the place was empty at all or most other times. Ibrahim deposited Isma'il and his mother there and left them some sustenance. Hagar built a little hut in which she settled with her son and whereto Ibrahim returned when he came. When water and provisions were exhausted, Hagar set out to look for food, but she could not find any. As the story tellers put it, she ran towards the valley seeking water and, not finding any, would run in another direction. After running to and fro seven times between Safā and Marwah, she returned in despair to her son.

Zamzam:

But what surprise when she found him! Having scratched the surface of the earth with his foot, he uncovered a water fountain which sprung under his feet. Hagar drank and gave Isma'il to drink until they were both satisfied. She then closed in the spring that its water might not be lost in the sand. Thereafter the child and his mother lived in Makkah. Arab travelers continued to use the place as a rest stop, and in exchange for services they rendered to the travelers who came with one caravan after another, Hagar and Isma'il were sufficiently provided for.

Subsequently a number of tribes liked the fountain water of Zamzam sufficiently to settle nearby. Jurhum was the first such tribe to settle in Makkah. Some versions assert that Jurhum was already settled in Makkah even before Hāgar and her son arrived there. According to other reports, no tribes settled in Makkah until Zamzam had sprung forth and made life possible in this otherwise barren valley and hence, after Isma'il's advent. Isma'il grew up, married a girl from the tribe of Jurhum and lived with this tribe in the same area where he built the holy temple. Thereafter, the city of Makkah arose around the temple. It is also

told that Ibrahim once took leave of Sarah to visit Isma'il and his mother.

Isma'ils' marriage:

When he inquired about the house of Isma'il and found it, he asked Isma'il's wife, "Where is your husband? She answered. "He went out to hunt."He then asked herwhethershe had any food or drink to give him. She answered in the negative. Before he turned back, Ibrahim asked her to convey to her husband a message. "Give him my greetings," he said, "and tells him that he should change the threshold of his house." When Isma'il's wife' related to her husband his father's message, he divorced her and married a girl from the Jurhum tribe, the daughter of Mudād ibn 'Amr. This second wife knew well how to entertain Ibrahim when he came to visit his son a second time later. At the end of his second visit, Ibrahim asked Jsma'il's wife to greet her husband for him and to tell him, "Now the threshold of your house is straight." Twelve sons were born to Isma'il from this marriage with the Jurhum girl. These were the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Arabized or Northern Arabs. On their mother's side these were related through Jurhum to the Arabizing Arabs, the Sons of Ya'rub ibn Qahtān. They were also related to Egypt through their grandmother on their father's side, Hagar, which was a close relation indeed. Through their grandfather Ibrahim, they were related to 'Iraq and to Palestine, his old and new abodes.'

Discussion of the Story

Despite disagreement on details, the main theme of this story which history had brought down to us, namely the emigration of Ibrahim and Isma'il to Makkah, is backed by an almost complete consensus on the part of the historians. The differences center on whether, when Hagar arrived with Isma'il in the valley of Makkah, the springs were already there and whether the tribe of Jurhum had already occupied the place and had welcomed Hagar

when Ibrahim brought her and her son to live in their midst. When Isma'il grew up, he married a Jurhum girl and had several Sons from her. It was this mixture of Hebrew, Egyptian and Arab blood that gave to Isma'il's descendants resoluteness, courage, and all the virtues of the native Arabs, the Hebrews, and the Egyptians combined. As for the detail regarding Hagar's difficulty when she ran out of water, and of her running to and fro between Safa and Marwah and the way in which Zamzam sprang forth, all these are subject to debate.

Sir William Muir, for instance, doubts the whole story of Ibrahim and Isma'il's trip to Hijaz and denies it altogether. He claims that it is one of the Israelitisms which the Jews had invented long before Islam in order to strike a link with the Arabs by making them descendents of Ibrahim, now father of all. Since the Jews regarded themselves as descendants of Ishaq, they would become the cousins of the Arabs and therefore entitled to Arab hospitality if the Arabs were declared the sons of Ishaq's brother, namely Isma'il. Such a theme, if properly advocated, was probably thought to help establish Jewish trade in the Peninsula. In making this claim, Muir assumed that the religious situation in Arabia was far removed from the religion of Abraham. The former was pagan whereas Ibrahim was a Hanif and a Muslim. For our part, we do not think that this is sufficient reason to deny a historical truth. Our evidence for the paganism of the Arabs is centuries later than the arrival of IbrahIm and Isma'il to the scene. It cannot therefore constitute any proof that at the time of Ibrahim's arrival to Hijāz and his building of the Ka'bah with his son Isma'il that the Arabs were pagan. Neither would Sir William's claims be corroborated had the religion of the Arabs been pagan at the time. Ibrahim's own, people, whom he tried to bring forth to monotheism without success, were also idol worshipers. Had Ibrahim called the Arabs to monotheism, as he did his' own people earlier, and not succeeded, and the Arabs remained idol worshipers, they would not have acquiesced to

Ibrahim's coming to Makkah nor in his son's settlement there. Rather, logic would here corroborate the report of history. Ibrahim, the man who left 'Iraq to escape from his people and traveled to Palestine and to Egypt, was a man who knew how to travel, and was familiar with desert crossing. The road between Palestine and Makkah was one trodden by the caravans for ages. There is, therefore, no reason to doubt a historical event which consensus has confirmed, at least in its general themes.

Sir William Muir and others who shared his view claim that it is possible that a number of the descendants of Ibrahim and Isma'il had moved to the Arabian Peninsula after they had settled in Palestine and that the blood relationship had developed after their arrival to Arabia. That is a fine opinion indeed! But if it is possible for the sons of Ibrahim and Isma'il to do such a thing, why should it not have been possible for the two men, Ibrahim and Isma'il personally, only a generation or two earlier? How can we deny a confirmed historical tradition? And how can we doubt an event which the Qur'ān, as well as a number of other old scriptures, has mentioned?

Ibrahim and Isma'il's Construction of the Ka'bah

Together Ibrahim and Isma'il laid down the foundations and built the holy temple. "It was the first house built for public orship in Makkah. It still stands as a blessing and guidance to mankind. In it are manifest signs; that is the house of Ibrahim. Whoever enters it shall be secure." Allah in the Holy Qur'an says:

﴿ إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِى بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَٰلَمِينَ
فِيهِ ءَايَٰتٌ بَيِّنَٰتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَمَن دَخَلَهُۥ كَانَ ءَامِنًا ﴾

سورة آل عمران الآيتان ٩٦-٩٧

(The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakka; full of blessing and of guidance for all the worlds In it are Signs manifest;, the Station of Abraham; whoever enters it attains security) (Al-Imran:96-97)

Allah in the Holy Qur'an also says:

﴿ وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا ٱلْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَٱتَّخِذُوا۟ مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ مُصَلًّى ۖ وَعَهِدْنَآ إِلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسْمَـٰعِيلَ أَن طَهِّرَا بَيْتِىَ لِلطَّآئِفِينَ وَٱلْعَـٰكِفِينَ وَٱلرُّكَّعِ ٱلسُّجُودِ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمُ رَبِّ ٱجْعَلْ هَـٰذَا بَلَدًا ءَامِنًا وَٱرْزُقْ أَهْلَهُۥ مِنَ ٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ مَنْ ءَامَنَ مِنْهُم بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ ۖ قَالَ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَأُمَتِّعُهُۥ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ أَضْطَرُّهُۥٓ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ ٱلنَّارِ ۖ وَبِئْسَ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمُ ٱلْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ ٱلْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَـٰعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّآ ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٢٧﴾ ﴾

سورة البقرة الآيات ١٢٥-١٢٧

(Remember We made the House a place of assembly for men and a place of safety; and take the Station of Abraham as a place of prayer; and We covenanted with Abraham and Isma'il, that they should sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or use it as a retreat, or bow, or prostrate themselves (therein in Prayer). And remember Abraham said: "My Lord, make this a City of Peace, and feed its People with fruits' such of them as believe in Allah and the Last Day." He said: "(Yea), and such as reject Faith, for a while will I grant them their

Pleasure, but will soon drive them to the torment of Fire, an evil destination (indeed)!" And remember Abraham and Isma'il raised the foundations of the House (with this prayer): "Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us: for you are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.)

(Al-Baqarah:125-127)

Religious Development in Arabia

How did it happen that Ibrahim built the house as a place of refuge and security for the people so that the believers in Allah alone might use it for prayer, and then it became a pantheon full of statues for idol worship? What were the conditions of worship after Ibrahim and Isma'il? In what form and with what ritual was worship conducted in the holy house? When were these conditions and forms superceded by paganism? In vain do we turn the pages of history books looking for answers to these questions. All we find therein are presumptions which their authors think are reports of facts. The Sabeans were star worshipers, and they enjoyed great popularity and prestige in Arabia. As the reports go, the Sabeans did not always worship the stars for their own sake. At one time it is said that they had worshiped Allah alone and venerated the stars as signs of His creation and power. Since the majority of people were neither endowed nor cultivated enough to understand the transcendent nature of the Godhead, they confused the stars with God and took them as gods. Some of the volcanic or meteoric stones appeared to men to have fallen from heaven and therefore to be astral in nature. Consequently, they were taken as hierophanies of the astral divinities and sanctified as such. Later on they were venerated for their own sake, and then worshipped as divinities. In fact, the Arabs venerated these stones so much that not only did they worship the black stone in the Ka'bah, but they would take one

of the stones of the Ka'bah as a holy object in their travels, praying to it and asking it to bless every move they made. Thus all the veneration and worship due to the stars, or to the creator of the stars, were now conferred upon these stones. It was in a development similar to this that paganism was established in Arabia, that the statues were sanctified, and that sacrifices were made to them.

This is the picture which some historians give of religious development in Arabia after Ibrahim dedicated the Ka'bah to the worship of Allah. Herodotus, father of written history, mentions the worship of al Lat in Arabia; and Diodorus, the Sicilian, mentions the house of Makkah venerated by the Arabs. Their two witnesses point to the antiquity of paganism in the Peninsula and therefore to the fact that the religion of Ibrahim was not always observed there.

The Arab Prophets

During these long centuries many prophets called their tribes to the worship of Allah alone. The Arabs gave them little hearing and continued with their paganism. Hud was one of those prophets sent to the tribe of 'Ad which lived in the north of Hadramawt. Few tribesmen responded to his call.

The majority were too proud to relinquish their old ways and they answered, as the Holy Qur'an said:

﴿ قَالُوا يَٰهُودُ مَا جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَارِكِيٓ ءَالِهَتِنَا عَن قَوْلِكَ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ ﴾ سورة هود آية ٥٣

(They said "O Hud! No Clear (Sign) have you brought us, and we are not the ones to desert our gods on your word! Nor shall we believe in you!) (Hud:53)

Hūd kept on calling for years, but the more he called the more obstinate they became. Similarly, Salih arose in the tribe of Thamūd who lived in al Hijr between Hijaz and al Sham, this side of Wādi al Qura and to the southeast of the land of Madyan, close to the Gulf of 'Aqabah. His call bore no more fruit than Hud's. Shu'ayb arose among the people of Madyan who then lived in the Hijaz. He called them to the worship of Allah alone, but they refused to hear and they perished as the people of 'Ad and Thamūd before them. The Qur'ānic narratives told us about the stories and missions of other prophets who called men unto Allah alone, and of their peoples' obstinacy and pride, their continued paganism, their worship of the idols of the Ka'bah, and their pilgrimage to the Ka'bah from every corner of the Arabian Peninsula. All this is implied in Allah's statement,

﴿ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا ﴾ سورة الإسراء آية ١٥

(Nor would We punish until We had sent a Messenger (to give warning). (Al Isra': 15)

Offices of the Ka'bah

Ever since its establishment, the Ka'bah gave rise to a number of offices such as those which were held by Qusayy ibn Kilab when he took over the kingship of Makkah, in the middle of the fifth century C.E. His offices included ***hijābah, siqayah, rifadah, nadwah, liwā'*** and ***qiyadah. Hijabah*** implied maintenance of the house and guardianship over its keys. ***Siqdyah*** implied the provision of fresh water-which was scarce in Makkah- as well as date wine to all the pilgrims. ***Rifadah*** implied the provision of food to the pilgrims. ***Nadwah*** implied the chairmanship of all convocations held. ***Qiyadah*** implied the leadership of the army at war. ***Liwā'*** was the flag which, hoisted

on a spear, accompaniad the army whenever it went out to meet the enemy and, hence, it meant a secondary command in times of war. All these offices were recognized as belonging to Makkah, indeed to the Ka'bah, to which all Arabs looked when in worship. It is more likely that not all of these offices developed at the time when the house was constructed but rather that they arose one after the other independently of the Ka'bah and its religious position, though some may have had to do with the Ka'bah by nature.

At the building of the Ka'bah, Makkah could not have consisted, even at best, of more than a few tribes of 'Amaliq and Jurhumis. A long time must have lapsed between Ibrahim and Isma'il's advent to Makkah and their building of the Ka'bah on the one hand, and the development of Makkah as a town or quasiurban center on the other. Indeed, as long as any vestiges of their early nomadism lingered in the mind and customs of the Makkans, we cannot speak of Makkah as urban.

Makkah before the Kingshipe of Qusayy:

Some historians would rather agree that Makkah had remained nomadic until the kingship of Qusayy in the middle of the fifth century C.E. On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine a town like Makkah remaining nomadic while her ancient house is venerated by the whole surrounding country. It is historically certain that the guardianship of the house remained in the hands of Jurhum, Isma'il's in-laws, for continuous generations. This implies continuous residence near the Ka'bah—a fact not possible for nomads bent on movement from pasture to pasture. Moreover, the well established fact that Makkah was the rendezvous of the caravans traveling between Yaman, Hirah, al Sham and Najd, that it was connected to the Red Sea close by and therefrom to the trade routes of the world, further refutes the

claim that Makkah was merely a nomad's campsite. We are therefore compelled to acknowledge that Makkah, which Ibrahim called "a town" and which he prayed Allah to bless, had known the life of settlement many generations before Qusayy.

Ascendency of Quraysh

After their conquest of the 'Amaliq, the tribe of Jurhum ruled Makkah until the regime of Mudād ibn 'Amr ibn al Hārith. During these generations, trade had prospered so well that the tribe of Jurhum waxed fat and forgot that they were really living in a desolate place and that they ought to work very hard to keep their position. Their neglect led to the drying up of the Zamzam spring; furthermore, the tribe of Khuzä'ah had even thought of conquering Makkah and establishing their authority over its whole precinct.

Mudad's warning to his people did not stop their indulgence and carelessness. Realizing that his and his tribe's power was on the decline and would soon be lost, he dug a deep hole within the well of Zamzam in which he buried two golden gazelles and the treasure of the holy house, with the hope that he would return some day to power and reclaim the treasure. Together with the Jurhum tribe and the descendants of Isma'il he withdrew from Makkah in favor of the tribe of Khuza'ah, who ruled it from generation to generation until the advent of Qusayy ibn Kilāb, the fifth grandfather of the Prophet (P.B.U.H).

***Qusayy ibn Kilāb* (circa 480 C.E.)**

Fātimah, daughter of Sa'd ibn Sayl, mother of Qusayy, married Kilab and gave him two sons, Zuhrah and Qusayy. Kilab died when Qusayy was an infant. Fatimah then married Rabi'ah

ibn Haram who took her with him to al Sham where she gave birth to a son called Darrāj. Qusayy grew up knowing no other father than Rabi'ah. When a quarrel broke out between Qusayy and some members of the Rabi'ah tribe, they reproached him as they would a foreigner and betrayed the fact that they never regarded him as one of their own. Qusayy complained to his mother and related to her the reproach he heard. Her answer was as defiant as it was proud. "0 my son," she said, "your descendance is nobler than theirs, you are the son of Kilab ibn Murrah, and your people live in the proximity of the holy house in Makkah."

This was the cause of Qusayy's departure from al Sham and return to Makkah. His seriousness and wisdom soon won him the respect of the Makkans. At the time, the guardianship of the holy house was in the hands of a man of the Khuza'ah tribe called Hulayl ibn Hubshiyyah, a very wise man with deep insight. Soon Qusayy asked for and married Hubba, daughter of Hulayl.

He continued to work hard at his trade and acquired much affluence, great respect, and many children. When his father-in-law died, he committed the keys of the Ka'bah to Hubba, wife of Qusayy. But the latter apologized and committed the keys to Abū Ghibshan, a man from Khuza'ah. Abū Ghibshan, however, was a drunkard and one day he exchanged the keys of the Ka'bah for a jug of wine from Qusayy. The Khuza'ah tribe realized that it was in danger should the guardianship of the Ka'bah remain in the hands of Qusayy whose wealth and influence were always increasing and around whom the tribe of Quraysh was now rallying. They therefore thought to dispossess him of his guardianship. Qusayy called upon the Quraysh tribe to help him and, with the concurrence of a number of tribes from the surrounding area, he was judged the wisest and the mightiest and confirmed in his guardianship. When the tribe of Khuza'ah had to evacuate, Qusayy combined in his person all the offices associated with the holy house and became king over the Quraysh.

Construction of Permanent Residences in Makkah

Some historians claim that Makkah had no constructed houses other than the Ka'bah until Qusayy became its king because neither Khuza'ah nor Jurhum wanted to raise any other construction besides the holy house and neither one spent his life outside of the holy area in the open desert. They added that upon his assumption of the kingship of Makkah, Qusayy commanded his people, the Quraysh tribe, to build their residences in the vicinity of the holy house. They also explained that it was Qusayy who built the house of Nadwah where the elders of Makkah met under his chairmanship in order to run the affairs of their city, for it was their custom not to allow anything to happen without their unanimous approval. No man or woman of Makkah married except in the Nadwah and with the approval of the Quraysh elders. According to this view, it was the Quraysh that built, at the command of Qusayy, their houses around the Ka'bah, leaving sufficient space for circumambulation of the holy house. Their residences in the vicinity were spaced so as to leave a narrow passage to the holy house between every two houses.

The Descendants of Qusayy

Although 'Abd al Dār was the eldest of Qusayy's children, his brother 'Abd Manaf was more famous and more respected by the people. As Qusayy grew old and weak and became unable to carry out the duties of his position, he delegated the ***hijabah*** to 'Abd al Dār and handed over to him the keys of the holy house. He also delegated to him the ***siqdyah,*** the ***liwa',*** and the ***rifddah."*** The ***rifddah*** implied a contribution the tribe of Quraysh used to levy from every member to help Qusayy in the

provision of food for pilgrims incapable of procuring nourishment on their own. Qusayy was the first to impose the ***rifadah*** on the Quraysh tribe; and he incepted this practice after he rallied the Quraysh and dislodged the tribe of Khuza'ah from Makkah. At the time the ***rifddah*** was imposed, Qusayy said, "0 people of Quraysh! You are the neighbors of Allah and the people of His house and temple. The pilgrim is the guest of Allah and visitor of His house. Of all guests that you receive during the year, the pilgrim is the most worthy of your hospitality. Provide for him food and drink during the days of pilgrimage."

The Descendants of 'Abd Manāf

'Abd al Dār discharged the new duties incumbent upon him as his father had directed. His sons did likewise after him but could not match the sons of 'Abd Manaf in honor and popular esteem. Hence, Hashim, 'Abd Shams, al Muttalib and Nawfal, the sons of 'Abd Manaf, resolved to take over these privileges from their cousins. The tribe of Quraysh stood divided into two factions, each supporting one of the contestants. The descendants of 'Abd Manāf concluded the ***Hilf al Mutayyibin,*** a treaty so called because the covenantors dipped their hands in perfume as they swore allegiance to its new terms. The descendants of 'Abd al Dār, for their part, entered into another treaty called ***Hilf al Ahlaf*** [literally, the alliance of the allies—Tr.], and the stage was set for a civil war which could have dissolved the Quraysh tribe. A peace was reached, however, under which the descendants of 'Abd Manaf were granted the ***siqayah*** and ***rifadah,*** and the descendents of 'Abd al Dār kept the ***hijabah,*** the ***liwa',*** and the ***nadwah.*** Thereafter the two parties lived in peace until the advent of Islam.

Hāshim (646 C.E.)

Hāshim was the leader of his people and a prosperous man. He was in charge of the ***siqayah*** and the ***rifadah.*** In the discharge of his duties he called upon every member of the Quraysh to make a contribution for use in providing food for the pilgrims.

Like his grandfather Qusayy, he argued with his contemporaries that the pilgrims and visitors to the house of Allah are Allah's guests and, therefore, worthy of their hospitality. He discharged his duties well and provided for all the pilgrims during the time of their pilgrimage in Makkah.

Makkan Affluence and Prosperity

Hāshim did for the people of Makkah more than his duty demanded. In a year of drought he was generous enough to provide food for the whole population and turned the occasion into one of joy. It was he who regulated and standardized the two main caravan trips of the Makkan traders, the winter trip to Yaman, and the summer trip to al Sham. Under his good ordering and wise leadership Makkah prospered and its position rose throughout the Peninsula. It soon became the acknowledged capital of Arabia. From this position of influence the descendents of 'Abd Manāf concluded peace treaties with their neighbors. Hāshim went in person to Byzantium and to the neighboring tribe of Ghassān to sign a treaty of friendship and good neighborliness. He obtained from Byzantium permission for the tribe of Quraysh to move anywhere in the territories of al Sham in peace and security. 'Abd Shams, on the other hand, concluded a treaty of trade with the Negus of Abyssinia and Nawfal and al Muttalib, both a treaty of friendship with Persia and a trade treaty with the Himyaris of Yaman. The glory of Makkah increased with its prosperity. The Makkans became so adept in trade that nobody

could compete with them. The caravans came to Makkah from all directions, and the goods were exported in two big convoys in summer and winter. Surrounding Makkah all kinds of markets were built to deal with all the attendant business. This experience developed in the Makkans competence in business affairs as well as adeptness in the administration of the calendar and interest in financing.

Hāshim remained the uncontested chief of Makkah throughout his life. Nobody thought of competing with him in this regard. His nephew, however, Umayyah ibn 'Abd Shams, did entertain such ideas but he lost and chose to live in exile in al Sham for ten full years. On one of his trips to al Sham, Hashim stopped in Yathrib where he saw a woman of noble birth engaging in business with some of her agents. That was Salma, daughter of 'Amr of the Khazraj tribe. Hāshim fell in love with her and inquired whether she was married. When he learned that she was a divorced woman, but a very independent person, he asked her directly to marry him. As his position and prestige were known to her, she accepted. She lived with him in Makkah for a while before she returned to MadInah where she gave birth to a son called Shaybah, whom she kept with her in Yathrib.

Al Muttalib

Several years later Hāshim died on one of his trips and was buried in 'Gaza. His brother, al Muttalib, succeeded him in his posts. Though al Muttalib was younger than 'Abd Shams, he was well esteemed by the people. The Quraysh used to call him "Mr. Abūndance" for his generosity and goodness. Naturally, with such competence and prestige as al Muttalib enjoyed, the situation in Makkah continued to be prosperous and peaceful.

One day al Muttalib thought of his nephew Shaybah. He went to Yathrib and asked Salmā to hand the child over now that

he had become fully grown. On return to Makkah, al Muttalib allowed the young man to precede him on his camel. The Quraysh thought that he was a servant of al Muttalib and called him so, namely 'Abd al Muttalib. When al Muttalib heard of this he said, "Hold it, Fellow Tribesmen. This man is not my servant but my nephew, son of Hāshim, whom I brought back from Yathrib." The title 'Abd al Muttalib was so popular, however, that the young man's old name, Shaybah, was forgotten.

'Abd al Muttalib (495 C.E.)

When al Muttalib sought to return to his nephew the wealth which Hāshim left behind, Nawfal objected and seized the wealth. 'Abd al Muttalib waited until he grew and then asked for the support of his uncles in Yathrib against his uncles in Makkah. Eighty Khazraj horsemen arrived from Yathrib ready to give him the military support he needed in order to reclaim his rights. Nawfal refused to fight and returned the seized wealth. 'Abd al Muttalib then was assigned the offices which Hashim occupied, namely the ***siqayah*** and the ***rifadah,*** after al Muttalib passed away. He experienced no little difficulty in discharging the requisite duties because at that time he had only one son, al Hārith. As the well of Zamzam had been destroyed, water had to be brought in from a number of sub-sidiary wells in the outskirts of Makkah and placed in smaller reservoirs near the Ka'bah. Plurality of descendants was an asset in the execution of such a task as this but 'Abd al Muttalib had only one son, and the task nearly exhausted him. Naturally, he gave the matter a good deal of thought.

The Re-digging of Zamzam

The Makkans still had memories of the Zamzam well which was filled with dirt by Mudād ibn 'Amr of the Jurhum tribe a few hundred years back and wished that it could be reactivated. This matter concerned 'Abd al Muttalib more than anyone else, and he gave it all his attention. Suffering under his duties, he thought so much about the matter that he even saw in his dreams a spirit calling him to re-dig the well whose waters sprang under the feet of his ancestor, Isma'il. But no one knew where the old well stood. Finally, after much investigation, 'Abd al Muttalib was inspired to try the place between the two idols, Isāf and Nā'ilah. Helped by his second son al Mughirah, he dug at the place until water sprang forth and the two golden gazelles and swords of Mudād of the Jurhum tribe appeared. The Quraysh wanted to share his find with 'Abd al Muttalib. After objecting, he finally came to an agreement with them to determine the rightful ownership of the treasure by the drawing of lots among three equal partners, namely the Ka'bah, the Quraysh, and himself. The divinatory arrows were drawn near the idol Hubal within the Ka'bah, and the result was that the Quraysh lost completely, 'Abd al Muttalib won the swords, and the Ka'bah won the two gazelles. 'Abd al Muttalib ordered his part, namely the swords, reforged as a door for the Ka'bah, and placed the two golden gazelles within the holy house as a decoration. Now that the Zamzam water was close by, 'Abd al Muttalib performed his ***siqayah*** duties with ease.

The Vow and Its Fulfillment

'Abd al Muttalib realized the limitations which his lack of children imposed upon him. He vowed that should he be given ten sons to grow to maturity and to help him in his task he would

sacrifice one of them to Allah near the Ka'bah. 'Abd al Muttalib's wish was to be fulfilled: he had ten fully grown sons. When he called them to assist him in the fulfillment of his vow, they accepted. It was agreed that the name of each one of them would be written on a divinatory arrow, that the arrows would be drawn near Hubal within the Ka'bah and that he whose name appeared on the drawn arrow would be sacrificed. It was then customary among the Arabs whenever they faced an insoluble problem to resort to divination by means of arrows at the foot of the greatest idol in the area. When the arrows were drawn it was the arrow of 'Abdullah, the youngest son of 'Abd al Muttalib and the most beloved that came out. Without hesitation 'Abd al Muttalib took the young man by the hand and prepared to sacrifice him by the well of Zamzam between the idols of Isaf and Na'ilah. 'Abd al Muttalib insisted upon the sacrifice, but the whole of Quraysh insisted that 'Abdullah be spared and that some kind of indulgence be sought from the god Hubal. Finally, in answer to 'Abd al Muttalib's inquiry as to what should be done to please the gods, al Mughirah ibn 'Abdullah al Makhzūmi volunteered the answer, "Perhaps the youth can be ransomed with wealth; in that case, we shall be pleased to give up all the necessary wealth to save him." After consultation with one another, they decided to consult a divineress in Yathrib renowned for her good insight. When they came to her, she asked them to wait until the morrow; upon their return she asked, "What, in your custom, is the amount of a man's blood wit?" "Ten camels," they answered. She said, "Return then to your country and draw near your god two arrows, one with the name of the youth and the other with the term 'ten camels.' If the arrow drawn is that of the youth, then multiply the number of camels and draw again until your god is satisfied. They accepted her solution and drew the divinatory arrows which they found to converge on 'Abdullah. They kept multiplying the number of camels until the number reached one hundred. It was then that

the camels' arrow was drawn. The people were satisfied and told 'Abd al Muttalib, who stood nearby in terror, "Thus did your god decide, 0 'Abd al Muttalib." But he answered, "Not at all! I shall not be convinced that this is my god's wish until the same result comes out three times consecutively." The arrows were drawn three times, and in all three it was the camels' arrow that came out. 'Abd al Muttalib then felt sure that his god was contented, and he sacrified the one hundred camels.

In this way the books of biography have reported to us some of the customs of the Arabs and of their religious doctrines. In this way they have informed us of the Arabs' adherence to these doctrines and of their loyalty and devotion to their holy house. In confirming this custom al Tabari reports that a Muslim woman had once vowed to sacrifice one of her sons. She sought the advice of 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar without much avail. She went to 'Abdullah ibn al 'Abbas who advised her to sacrifice one hundred camels after the example of 'Abd al Muttalib. But when Marwan, the governor of Madinah, knew of what she was about, he forbade her to do it, holding to the Islamic principle that no vow is valid whose object is illegitimate.

The Year of the Elephant (570 C.E.)

The respect and esteem which Makkah and her holy house enjoyed suggested to some distant provinces in Arabia that they should construct holy houses in order to attract some of the people away from Makkah. The Ghassanis built such a house at al Hirah. Abrahah al Ashram built another in Yaman. Neither of them succeeded, however, in drawing the Arabs away from Makkah and its holy house. Indeed, Abrahah took a special care to decorate the house in Yaman and filled it with such beautiful furniture and statues that he thought that he could draw thereto not only the Arabs but the Makkans themselves. When later he

found out that the Arabs were still going to the ancient house, that the inhabitants of Yaman were leaving behind the newly built house in their own territory and did not regard the pilgrimage valid except in Makkah, he came to the conclusion that there was no escape from destroying the house of Ibrahim and Isma'il. The viceroy of the Negus therefore prepared for war and brought a great army for that purpose from Abyssinia equipped with a great elephant on which he rode. When the Arabs heard of his war preparations, they became quite upset and feared the impending doom of Makkah, the Ka'bah, its statues, and the institution of pilgrimage. Dhū Nafar, a nobleman from Yaman, appealed to his fellow countrymen to revolt and fight Abrahah and thus prevent him from the destruction of Allah's house. Abrahah, however, was too strong to be fought with such tactics: Dhu Nafar as well as Nufayl ibn Habib al Khath'ami, leader of the two tribes of Shahran and Nahis, were taken prisoners after a brief but gallant fight. On the other hand, the people of al Ta'if, when they learned that it was not their house that he intended to destroy, cooperated with Abrahah and sent a guide with him to show him the way to Makkah.

Abrahah and the Ka'bah

Upon approaching Makkah, Abrahah sent a number of horsemen to seize whatever there was of Quraysh's animal wealth in the outskirts. The horsemen returned with some cattle and a hundred camels belonging to 'Abd al Muttalib. The Quraysh and other Makkans first thought of holding their ground and fighting Abrahah, but they soon realized that his power was far superior to theirs. Abrahah sent one of his men, Hunatah al Himyari to inform 'Abd al Muttalib, chief of Makkah, that Abrahah had not come to make war against the Makkans but only to destroy the house and that should the Makkans not stand in his way, he

would not fight them at all. When 'Abd al Muttalib declared the intention of Makkah not to .fight Abrahah, Hunatah invited 'Abd al Muttalib and his sons and some of the leaders of Makkah to Abrahah's encampment in order to talk to Abrahah directly. Abrahah received 'Abd al Muttalib well and returned his seized camels. But he refused to entertain any suggestion of saving the Ka'bah from destruction as well as the Makkans' offer to pay him one-third of the yearly crop of the Tihāmah province. The conference therefore came to no conclusion, and 'Abd al Muttalib returned to Makkah. He immediately advised the Makkans to evacuate the city and withdraw to the mountains and thus save their own persons.

It was certainly a grave day on which the Makkans decided to evacuate their town and leave it an open city for destruction by Abrahah. 'Abd al Muttalib and the leaders of the Quraysh grasped the lock of the door of the Ka'bah and prayed to their gods to stop this aggression against the house of Allah As they left Makkah, and Abrahah prepared to send his terrifying and formidable army into the city to destroy the house, small-pox spread within its ranks and began to take its toll. The epidemic attacked the army with unheard of fury. Perhaps the microbes of the disease were carried there by the wind from the west. Abrahah himself was not spared; and terrified by what he saw, he ordered the army to return to Yaman. Attacked by death and desertion, Abrahah's army dwindled to almost nothing, and, by the time he reached San'a', his capital in Yaman, he himself succumbed to the disease. This phenomenon was so extraordinary that the Makkans reckoned time with it by calling that year "The Year of the Elephant." The Qur'ān had made this event immortal when it said,

﴿ أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَٰبِ ٱلْفِيلِ ۞ أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِى تَضْلِيلٍ ۞ وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ ۞ تَرْمِيهِم بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ ۞ فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ ۞ ﴾ (الفيل ١ - ٥)

Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the Companions of the Elephant?

Did He not make their treacherous plan go astray?

And He sent against them flights of Birds,

Striking them with stones of baked clay.

Then did He make them like an empty field of stalks and straw, (of which the corn) has been eaten up.

(Al-fil: 1-5)

The Position of Makkah after the Year of the Elephant

This extraordinary event enhanced the religious position of Makkah as well as her trade. Her people became more committed than ever to the preservation of their exalted city and to resist every attempt at reducing it.

Makkan Luxury

The prosperity, affluence, and luxury which Makkah provided for its citizens, like an island in a large barren desert, confirmed the Makkans in their parochial zeal.

The Makkans loved their wine and the revelry it brought. It helped them satisfy their passionate search for pleasure and to find that pleasure in the slave girls with which they traded and who invited them to ever increasing indulgence. Their pursuit of pleasure, on the other hand, confirmed their personal freedom and the freedom of their city which they were prepared to protect

against any aggressor at any cost. They loved to hold their celebrations and their drinking parties right in the center of the city around the Ka'bah. There, in the proximity of three hundred or more statues belonging to about three hundred Arab tribes, the elders of the Quraysh and the aristocracy of Makkah held their ***salons*** and told one another tales of trips across desert or fertile land, tales of the kings of Hirah on the east or of Ghassān on the west, which the caravans and the nomads brought back and forth. The tribes carried these tales and customs throughout their areas with great speed, efficiency, and application. Makkan pastimes consisted of telling these stories to neighbors and friends and of hearing others, of drinking wine, and of preparing for a big night around the Ka'bah or in recovering from such a night. The idols must have witnessed with their stone eyes all this revelry around them. The revelers were certain of protection since the idols had conferred upon the Ka'bah a halo of sanctity and peace. The protection, however, was mutual, for it was the obligation of the Makkans never to allow a scripturist, ***i.e.,*** Christian or Jew, to enter Makkah except in the capacity of a servant and under the binding covenant that he would not speak in Makkah either of his religion or of his scripture. Consequently, there were neither Jewish nor Christian communities in Makkah, as was the case in Yathrib and Najran. The Ka'bah was then the holy of holies of paganism and securely protected against any attack against its authorities or sanctity. Thus Makkah was as independent as the Arab tribes were, ever unyielding in its protection of that independence which the Makkans regarded as worthier than life. No tribe ever thought of rallying with another or more tribes in order to form a union with superior strength to Makkah, and none ever entertained any idea of conquering her. The tribes remained separated, leading a pastoral nomadic existence but enjoying to the full the independence, freedom, pride, and chivalry, as well as the individualism which the life of the desert implied.

The Residences of Makkah

The houses of the Makkans surrounded the Ka'bah and stood at a distance from it proportionate to the social position, descendance, and prestige these inhabitants enjoyed. The Qurayshis were the closest to the Ka'bah and the most related to it on account of the offices of ***sidānah*** and ***siqāyah'*** which they held. On this account no honorific title was withheld from them, and it was for the sake of these titles that wars were fought, pacts concluded, and treaties covenanted. The texts of all Makkan treaties and pacts were kept in the Ka'bah so that the gods who, undoubtedly, were taken as witnesses thereto, might punish those covenanters who violated their promises. Beyond these stood the houses of the less important tribes, and further still stood the houses of the slaves, servants and those without honor. In Mākkah the Jews and Christians were slaves, as we said earlier. They were therefore allowed to live only in these far away houses on the edge of the desert. Whatever religious stories they could tell regarding Christianity or Judaism would be too far removed from the ears of the lords and nobles of Quraysh and Makkah. This distance permitted the latter to stop their ears as well as their conscience against all serious concern. Whatever they heard of Judaism or Christianity they obtained from a monastery or a hermitage recluse in the desert which lay on some road of the caravans.

Even so, the rumors circulating at the time about the possible rise of a prophet (P.B.U.H) among the Arabs caused them great worry. Abū Sufyan one day strongly criticized Umayyah ibn Aba al Salt for repeating such Messianic stories as the monks circulated. One can imagine Abū Sufyan addressing Umayyah in some such words as these, "Those monks in the desert expect a Messiah because of their ignorance of their own religion. Surely they need a prophet to guide them thereto. As for us, we have the

idols right here close by, and they do bring us close to Allah. We do not need any prophet, and we ought to combat any such suggestion." Fanatically committed to his native city as well as to its paganism, it was apparently impossible for Abū Sufyan to realize that the hour of guidance was just about to strike, that the prophethood of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had drawn near, and that from these pagan Arab lands a light was to shine over the whole world to illuminate it with monotheism and truth.

'Abdullah ibn 'Abd al Muttalib

'Abdullah ibn 'Abd al Muttalib was a handsome young man admired by the unmarried women of his town. They were fascinated by the story of ransom and the hundred camels which the god Hubal insisted on receiving in his stead. But fate had already prepared 'Abdullah for the noblest fatherhood that history had known, just as it had prepared Aminah, daughter of Wahb, to be mother to the son of 'Abdullah. The couple were married and, a few months after their marriage, 'Abdullah passed away. None could ransom him from this later fate. Aminah survived him, gave birth to Muhammad (P.B.U.H), and joined her husband while Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was still an infant.

3

Muhammad (P.B.U.H)
From Birth to Marriage

The Marriage of 'Abdullah and Aminah

'Abd al Muttalib was seventy years old or more when Abraha arrived in Makkah to destroy the ancient house. His son 'Abdullah was twenty-four years of age and was hence ready for marriage. His father chose for him Aminah, daughter of Wahb ibn 'Abd Manāf ibn Zuhrah, the chief of the tribe of Zuhrah as well as its eldest and noblest member. 'Abd al Muttalib took his son and went with him to the quarter of the tribe of Zuhrah. There, he sought the residence of Wahb and went in to ask for the hand of Wahb's daughter for his son. Some historians claim that 'Abd al Muttalib went to the residence of Uhayb, uncle of Aminah, assuming that her father had passed away and that she was under the protection of her uncle. On the same day that 'Abdullah married Aminah, his father 'Abd al Muttalib married a cousin of hers named Hālah. It was thus that the Prophet (P.B.U.H) could have an uncle on his father's side, namely Hamzah, of the same age as he.

As was the custom in those days, 'Abdullah lived with Aminah among her relatives the first three days of the marriage. Afterwards, they moved together to the quarter of 'Abd al

Muttalib, and soon he was to be called on a trading trip to al Sham. When he left, Aminah was pregnant. A number of stories circulated telling of 'Abdullah's marriage with other women besides Aminah and of many women's seeking to marry 'Abdullah. It is not possible to ascertain the truth of such tales. What is certainly true is that 'Abdullah was a very handsome and strong young man; and it is not at all surprising that other women besides Aminah had wished to marry him. Such women would have at least temporarily given up hope once 'Abdullah's marriage to Aminah was announced. But who knows! It is not impossible that they may have waited for his return from al Sham hoping that they might still become his wives along with Aminah. 'Abdullah was absent for several months in Gaza. On his way back he stopped for a longer rest at Madinah, where his uncles on his mother's side lived, and was preparing to join a caravan to Makkah when he fell ill. When the caravan reached Makkah his father was alerted to 'Abdullah's absence and disease. 'Abd al Muttalib immediately sent his eldest son al Hārith to Madinah in order to accompany 'Abdullah on the trip back to Makkah after his recovery. Upon arriving at Madinah, however, al Hārith learned that 'Abdullah had died and that he had been buried in Madinah a month after the start of that same caravan to Makkah. Al Hārith returned to Makkah to announce the death of 'Abdullah to his aged father and his bereaved wife Aminah. The shock was tremendous, for 'Abd al Muttalib loved his son so much as to have ransomed him with a hundred camels, a ransom never equalled before.

'Abdullah left five camels, a herd of sheep, and a slave nurse, called Umm Ayman, who was to take care of the Prophet (P.B.U.H). This patrimony does not prove that 'Abdullah was wealthy, but at the same time it does not prove that he was poor. Furthermore, 'Abdullah was still a young man capable of working and of amassing a fortune. His father was still alive and none of his wealth had as yet been transferred to his sons.

The Birth of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) (570 C.E.)

There was nothing unusual about Aminah's pregnancy or delivery. As soon as she delivered her baby, she sent to 'Abd al Muttalib, who was then at the Ka'bah, announcing to him the birth of a grandson. The old man was overjoyed at the news and must have remembered on this occasion his loved one 'Abdullah. He rushed to his daughter-in-law, took her newborn in his hands, went into the Ka'bah and there called him "Muhammad." (P.B.U.H). This name was not familiar among the Arabs, but it was known. He then returned the infant to his mother and awaited by her side for the arrival of wet nurses from the tribe of Banu Sa'd in order to arrange for one of them to take care of the new born, as was the practice of Makkan nobility.

Historians have disagreed about the year of Muhammad's birth (P.B.UH). Most of them hold that it took place in "the Year of the Elephant," *i.e.* 570 C.E. Ibn 'Abbās claims that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was born on "the Day of the Elephant." Others claim that he was born fifteen years earlier. Still others claim that he was born a few days, months, or years, after "the Year of the Elephant." Some even assert that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was born thirty years and others seventy years later than "the Year of the Elephant." Historians have also differed concerning the month of Muhammad's birth (P.B.U.H) although the majority of them agree that it was Rabi' al Awwal, the third month of the lunar year. It has also been claimed that he was born in Muharram, in Safar, in Rajab, or in Ramadan. Furthermore, historians have differed as to the day of the month on which Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was born. Some claim that the birth took place on the third of Rabi' al Awwal; others, on the ninth; and others on the tenth. The majority, however, agree that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was born on the twelfth of Rabi' al Awwal, the claim of ibn Ishāq and other biographers. Moreover, historians disagreed as to the time of day at which Muhammad

(P.B.U.H) was born, as well as to the place of birth. Caussin de Perceval wrote in his book on the Arabs that after weighing the evidence, it is most probable that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was born in August. 570 C.E., *i.e.* "the Year of the Elephant," and that he was born in the house of his grandfather 'Abd al Muttalib in Makkah. On the seventh day after Muhammad's birth, (P.B.U.H) 'Abd al Muttalib gave a banquet in honor of his grandson to which he invited a number of Quraysh tribesmen and peers. When they inquired from him why he had chosen to name the child Muhammad, (P.B.U.H) thus changing the practise of using the ancestors' names, 'Abd al Muttalib answered: "I did so with the wish that my grandson would be praised by Allah in heaven and on earth by men."

Muhammad's Nurses

Aminah waited for the arrival of the wet nurses from the tribe of Banu Sa'd to choose one for Muhammad (P.B.U.H), as was the practice of the noble of Makkah. This custom is still practiced today among Makkah aristorcracy. They send their children to the desert on the eighth day of their birth to remain there until the age of eight or ten. Some of the desert have a reputation as providers of excellent wet nurses, especially the tribe of Banu Sa'd. At that time, Aminah gave her infant to Thuwaybah, servent of Muhammad's uncle Abu Labah, who nrsed him for a while as she did his uncle Hamzah later on, making the two brothers-in-nursing. Although Thuwaybah nursed Muhammad (P.B.U.H) but a few days, he kept for her great affection and respect as long as she lived. When she died 7A.H. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) remembered to inquire about her son, who was also his brother-in-nursing, but he had died before her.

The wet nurses of the tribe of Banu Sa'd finally arrived at

Makkah to seek infants to nurse. The prospect of an orphan child did not much attract them since they hoped to be well rewarded by the father. The infants of widows, such as Muhammad (P.B.U.H), were not attractive at all. Not one of them accepted Muhammad (P.B.U.H) into her care, preferring the infants of the living and of the affuent.

Halimah, Daughter of Abū Dhu'ayb

Having spurned him at first as her colleagues had done before her, Halimah al Sa'diyyah, daughter of Abū Dhu'ayb, accepted Muhammad (P.B.U.H) into her charge because she had found no other. Thin and rather poor looking, she did not appeal to the ladies of Makkah. When her people prepared to leave Makkah for the desert, Halimah pleaded to her husband al Hārith ibn 'Abd al 'Uzza, "By God it is oppressive to me to return with my friends without a new, infant to nurse. Surely, I should go back to that orphan and accept him." Her husband answered, "There would be no blame if you did. Perhaps God may even bless us for your doing so." Halimah therefore took Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and carried him with her to the desert. She related that after she took him, she found all kinds of blessings. Her herd became fat and multiplied, and everything around her seemed to prosper.

In the desert Halimah nursed Muhammad (P.B.U.H) for two whole years while her daughter Shayma' cuddled him. The purity of desert air and the hardness of desert living agreed with Muhammad's physical (P.B.U.H) disposition and contributed to his quick growth, sound formation, and discipline. At the completion of the two years, which was also the occasion of his weaning, Halimah took the child to his mother but brought him back with her to the desert to grow up away from Makkah and her epidemics. Biographers disagree whether Halimah's new

lease on her charge was arranged after her own or Aminah's wishes. The child lived in the desert for two more years playing freely in the vast expanse under the clear sky and growing unfettered by anything physical or spiritual.

The Story of Splitting Muhammad's Chest (P.B.U.H)

It was in this period and before Muhammad (P.B.U.H) reached the age of three that the following event is said to have happened. It is told that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was playing in a yard behind the encampment of the tribe with Halimah's son when the latter ran back to his parents and said, "Two men dressed in white took my Qurayshi brother, laid him down, opened his abdomen, and turned him around." It is also reported that Halimah said, "My husband and I ran towards the boy and found him standing up and pale. When we asked what happened to him, the boy answered, "Two men dressed in white came up to me, laid me down, opened my abdomen and took something I know not what away." The parents returned to their tent fearing that the child had become possessed. They therefore returned him to Makkah to his mother. Ibn Ishaq reported a *hadith* issuing from the Prophet (P.B.U.H) after his commission confirming this incident. But he was careful enough to warn the reader that the real reason for Muhammad's return (P.B.U.H) to his mother was not the story of the two angels but, as Halimah was to report to Muhammad's mother (P.B.U.H) later on, the fact that a number of Abyssinian Christians wanted to take Muhammad (P.B.U.H) away with them once they had seen him after his weaning. According to Halimah's report, the Abyssinians had said to one another, "Let us take this child with -us to our country and our king, for we know he is going to be of consequence." Halimah could barely disengage herself from them and run away with her protégé. This story is also told by al Tabari, but he casts

suspicion on it by reporting it first at this early year of Muhammad's age (P.B.U.H) as well as later, just before the Prophet's commission (P.B.U.H) at the age of forty.

Orientalists and many Muslim scholars do not trust the story and find the evidence therefor spurious. The biographies agree that the two men dressed in white were seen by children hardly beyond their second year of age—which constitutes no witness at all—and that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) lived with the tribe of Banū Sa'd in the desert until he was five. The claim that this event had taken place while Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was two and a half years old and that Halimah and her husband returned the child to his mother immediately thereafter, contradicts this general consensus. Consequently, some writers have even asserted that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) returned with Halimah for the third time. The Orientalist, Sir William Muir, refuses even to mention the story of the two men in white clothes. He wrote that if Halimah and her husband had become aware of something that had befallen the child, it must have been a sort of nervous breakdown, which could not at all have hurt Muhammad's healthy (P.B.U.H) constitution. Others claim that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) stood in no need of any such surgery as God had prepared him at birth for receiving the divine message. Dermenghem believes that this whole story has no foundation other than the speculative interpretations of the following Qur'ānic verses:

﴿ أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ ۝ وَوَضَعْنَا عَنكَ وِزْرَكَ ۝ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَنقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ ۝ ﴾ (الشرح ١ - ٣)

(Have We not expanded you your breast? And removed from you your burden The which did gall you back?) (Al-Sharh: 1-3)

Certainly, in these verses the Qur'ān is pointing to something purely spiritual. It means to describe a purification of the heart as

preparation for receipt of the divine message and to stress Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) over-taxing burden of prophethood.

Those orientalists and Muslim thinkers who take this position *vi.s-d-vis* the foregoing tradition do so in consideration of the fact that the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was human through and through and that in order to prove his prophethood the Prophet never had recourse to miracle-mongering as previous prophets had done. This finding is corroborated by Arab and Muslim historians who consistently assert that the life of the Arab Prophet (P.B.U.H) is free of anything irrational or mysterious and who regard the contrary as inconsistent with the Qur'ānic position that God's creation is rationally analyzable, that His laws are immutable, and that the pagans are blameworthy because they do not reason.

Muhammad in the Desert

Until the fifth year of his life Muhammad (P.B.U.H) remained with the tribe of Banū Sa'd inhaling with the pure air of the desert the sprit of personal freedom and independence. From this tribe he learned the Arabic language in its purest and most classical form. Justifiably, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) used to tell his companions, "I am the most Arab among you, for I am of the tribe of Quraysh and I have been brought up among the tribe of Banū Sa'd ben Bakr."

These five years exerted upon Muhammad (P.B.U.H) a most beautiful and lasting influence, as Halimah and her people remained the object of his love and admiration all the length of his life. When, following his marriage with Khadijah a drought occurred and Halimah came to visit. Muhammad (P.B.U.H), she returned with a camel loaded with water and forty heads of cattle. Whenever Halimah visited Muhammad (P.B.U.H), he stretched out his mantle for her to sit on as a sign of the respect he felt he owed her. Shayma', Halimah's daughter, was taken captive by the Muslim forces along with Banū Hawāzin after the

seize of Tā'if. When she was brought before Muhammad (P.B.U.H), he recognized her, treated her well, and sent her back to her people as she wished.

The young Muhammad (P.B.U.H) returned to his mother after five years of desert life. It is related that when Halimah brought the boy into Makkah, she lost him in the outskirts of the city. 'Abd al Muttalib sent his scouts to look for him and he was found with Waraqah ibn Nawfal. 'Abd al Muttalib took his grandson under his protection, and made him the object of great love and affection. As lord of Quraysh and master of the whole of Makkah, the aged leader used to sit on a cushion laid out in the shade of the Ka'bah. His children would sit around that cushion, not on it, in deference to their father. But whenever Muhammad (P.B.U.H) joined the group, 'Abd al Muttalib would bring him close to him and ask him to sit on the cushion. He would pat the boy's back and show off his pronounced affection for him so that Muhammad's uncles could never stop him from moving ahead of them to his grandfather's side.

Orphanhood

The grandson was to become the object of yet greater endearment to his grandfather. His mother, Aminah, took him to Madinah in order to acquaint him with her uncles, the Banū al Najjar. She took with her on that trip Umm Ayman, the servant left behind by her husband 'Abdullah. In Madinah, Aminah must have shown her little boy the house where his father died as well as the grave where he was buried. It was then that the boy must have first learned what it means to be an orphan. His mother must have talked much to him about his beloved father who had left her a few days after their marriage, and who had met his death among his uncles in Madinah. After his emigration to that city the Prophet (P.B.U.H) used to tell his companions about this first trip to Madinah in his mother's company. The traditions have preserved for us a number of sayings which could have

come only from a man full of love for Madinah and full of grief for the loss of those who were buried in its graves. After a stay of a month in Yathrib,

The Death of Amina:

Aminah prepared to return to Makkah with her son and set out on the same two camels which carried them thither. On the road, at the village of Abwā' Aminah became ill, died, and was buried. It was Umm Ayman that brought the lonely and bereaved child to Makkah, henceforth doubly confirmed in orphanhood. A few days earlier he must have shared his mother's grief as she told him of her bereavement while he was yet unborn. Now he was to see with his own eyes the loss of his mother and add to his experience of shared grief that of a grief henceforth to be borne by him alone.

The Death of 'Abd al Muttalib

The doubled orphanhood of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) increased 'Abd al Muttalib's affection for him. Nonetheless, his orphanhood cut deeply into Muhammad's soul (P.B.U.H). Even the Qur'ān had to console the Prophet reminding him, as it were,

﴿ أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ ۝٦ وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ ۝٧ ﴾

سورة الضحى الآيتان: ٦, ٧

(Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter (and care)? And He found you wandering, and He gave thee guidance.) (Ad-duha:6-7)

It would have been somewhat easier on the orphaned boy had 'Abd al Muttalib lived longer than he did, to the ripe age of eighty when Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was still only eight years old. The boy must have felt the loss just as strongly as he had felt

that of his mother. At the funeral Muhammad (P.B.U.H) cried continuously; thereafter, the memory of his grandfather was ever present to his mind despite all the care and protection which his uncle Abū Talib gave him before and after his commission to prophethood. The truth is that the passing of 'Abd al Muttalib was a hard blow to the whole clan of Banū Hashim, for none of his children had ever come to enjoy the respect and position, the power, wisdom, generosity, and influence among all Arabs as he had. 'Abd al Muttalib fed the pilgrim, gave him to drink, and came to the rescue of any Makkah in his hour of need. His children, on the other hand, never achieved that much. The poor among them were unable to give because they had little or nothing, and the rich were too stingy to match their father's generosity. Consequently, the clan of Banū Umayyah prepared to take over the leadership of Makkah, till then enjoyed by Banā Hāshim, undaunted by any opposition the latter might put forth.

Under Abū Tālib's Protection

The protection of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) now fell to Aba Tālib, his uncle. Abū Tālib was not the eldest of the brothers. Al Hārith was the eldest but he was not prosperous enough to expand his household responsibilities. Al 'Abbās, on the other hand, was the richest but he was not hospitable: he undertook the *siqayah* alone and refused to assume responsibility for the *rifadah.* Despite his poverty, Aba Tālib was the noblest and the most hospitable and, therefore, the most respected among the Quraysh. No wonder that the protection of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) devolved upon him.

The First Trip to al Sham

Abū Talib loved his nephew just as 'Abd al Muttalib had done before him. He loved him so much that he gave him

precedence over his own children. The uprightness, intelligence, charity, and good disposition of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) strengthened the uncle's attachmenh to him. Even when Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was twelve years old, Abu Talib did not take him along on his trade trips thinking that he was too young to bear the hardship of the desert travel. It was only after Muhammad's strong (P.B.U.H) insistence that Abu Talib permitted the child to accompany him and join the trip to al Sham. In connection with this trip which he took at an early age, the biographers relate Muhammad's encounter (P.B.U.H) with the monk Bahirah at Busra, in the southern region of al Sham. They tell how the monk recognized in Muhammad (P.B.U.H) the signs of the prophethood as told in Christian books. Other traditions relate that the monk had advised Abu Talib not to take his nephew too far within al Sham for fear that the Jews would recognize the signs and harm the boy.

On this trip Muhammad (P.B.U.H) must have learned to appreciate the vast expanse of the desert and the brilliance of the stars shining in its clear atmosphere. He must have passed through Madyan, Wādi al Qura, the lands of Thamud, and his attentive ears must have listened to the conversation of the Arabs and desert nomads about the cities and their history. On this trip, too, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) must have witnessed the luscious green gardens of al Sham which far surpassed those of Tā'if back at home. These gardens must have struck his imagination all the more strongly as he compared them with the barren dryness of the desert and of the mountains surrounding Makkah. It was in al Sham that he came to know of Byzantine and Christian history and heard of the Christians' scriptures and of their struggle against the fire-worshipping Persians. True, he was only at the tender age of twelve, but his great soul, intelligence, maturity, power of observation, memory and all the other qualities with which he was endowed in preparation for his prophethood enabled him 'at an early age to listen perceptively

and to observe details. Later on he would review in memory all that he had seen or heard and he would investigate it all in solitude, asking himself, "What, of all he has seen and heard, is the truth?"

In all likelihood, Abū Talib's trip to al Sham did not bring in much income. He never undertook another trip and was satisfied to remain in Makkah living within his means and taking care of his many children. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) lived with his uncle, satisfied with his lot. There, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) grew like any other child would in the city of Makkah. During the holy months he would either remain with his relatives or accompany them to the neighboring markets at 'Ukāz, Majannah, and Dhu al Majāz. There he would listen to the recitations of the *Mudhahhabāt* and Mu'allaqat poems and be enchanted by their eloquence, their erotic lyricism, the pride and noble lineage of their heroes, their conquests, hospitality, and magnanimity. All that the visits to these market places presented to his consciousness, he would later review, approve of, and admire or disapprove of and condemn; There, too, he would listen to the speeches of Christian and Jewish Arabs who strongly criticized the paganism of their fellow countrymen, who told about the scriptures of Jesus and Moses, and called men to what they believed to be the truth. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) would review and weigh these views, preferring them to the paganism of his people, though not quite convinced of their claims to the truth. Thus Muhammad's circumstances exposed him at a tender age to what might prepare him for the great day, the day of the first revelation, when Allah called him to convey His message of truth and guidance to all mankind.

The Fijar War

Just as Muhammad (P.B.U.H) learned the routes of the

caravans in the desert from his uncle Abū Talib, and just as he listened to the poets and the orators in the markets around Makkah during the holy months, he learned how to bear arms. In the Fijar War he stood on the side of his uncle. The war was so-called because, unlike other wars, it was fought during the holy months. Arabia stood then under the convention that during the holy months no tribe should undertake any hostile activity against another; the general peace permitted the markets of 'Ukāz between Tā'if and Makkah, of Majannah and Dhu al Majaz in the proximity of 'Arafat, to be held and to prosper. On these market occasions, men were not restricted to trade. They competed with one another in poetry and debated, and they performed a pilgrimage to their gods in the Ka'bah. The market at 'Ukāz was the most famous in Arabia. There, the authors of the Mu'allaqāt poems recited their poetry. Quss exercized his oratory, and Jews, Christians and pagans spoke freely each about his faith in the peace and security that the holy months provided.

In violation of the holiness of such months, al Barrād ibn Qays al Kinani stealthily attacked 'Urwah al Rahhal ibn 'Utbah al Hawāzini and killed him. Every year at this time, al Nu'mān ibn al Mundhir, King of Hirah, used to send a caravan to 'Ukaz to bring thither a load of musk and to take hence a load of hides, ropes, and brocade from Yaman. Al Barrad al Kinani offered his services to guide the caravan as it passed through the lands of his tribe, namely Kinanah. 'Urwah al Hawazini did likewise and offered to guide the caravan through the Hijāz on the road of Najd. King al Nu'man chose 'Urwah and rejected the offer of al Barrād. The latter, enraged with jealously, followed the caravan, committed his crime, and ran away with the caravan itself. Al Barrād then informed Bishr ibn Abū Hazim that the tribe of Hawāzin would avenge the murder of 'Urwah from Quraysh because the crime took place within the area under Quraysh jurisdiction. Indeed, members of the tribe of Hawazin followed members of the tribe of Quraysh and caught up with them before

the latter entered the holy sanctuary. Hawāzin, not yet satisfied, warned that they would make war next year at 'Ukāz. This war continued to rage between the two parties for four consecutive years. It ended in reconciliation and a peace treaty, very much the kind of arrangement usually met with in the desert. The tribe with the lesser number of casualties would pay the other tribe the bloodwit of the victims making up the difference. In the arrangement between Quraysh and Hawazin, the former paid the latter the bloodwit of twenty men. Henceforth, al Barrād became the exemplar of mischief. History has not established the age of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) during the Fijar War. Reports that he was fifteen and twenty years old have circulated. Perhaps the difference is due to the fact that the Fijār War lasted at least four years. If Muhammad (P.B.U.H) saw its beginning at the age of fifteen, he must have been close to twenty at the conclusion of the peace.

There is apparent consensus as to the kind of participation that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had in this war. Some people claim that he was charged with collecting the arrows falling within the Makkan camp and bringing them over to his uncle for re-use against the enemy. Others claim that he himself participated in the shooting of these arrows. Since the said War lasted four years, it is not improbable that both claims are true. Years after his commission to prophethood, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said, "I had witnessed that war with my uncle and shot a few arrows therein. How I wish I had never done so!

The Alliance of Fudūl

Following the Fijār War, the Quraysh realized that their tragedy and deterioration as well as all the loss of Makkah's prestige in Arabia which they entailed ever since the death of Hishām and 'Abd al Muttalib were largely due to their disagree-

ment and internal division. They realized that once they were the unquestioned leaders of Arabia, immune to all attacks, but that every tribe was now anxious to pick a fight with them and deprive them of what was left of their prestige end authority. With this recognition, al Zubayr ibn 'Abd al Muttalib called together the houses of Hashim, Zuhrah, and Taym and entertained them at the residence of 'Abdullah ibn Jud'ān. At his request and appeal, they covenanted together, making Allah their witness that they will henceforth and forever stand on the side of the victim of injustice. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) attended the conclusion of this pact, which the Arabs called the Alliance of Fudūl, and said, "I uphold the pact concluded in my presence when ibn Jud'an gave us a great banquet. Should it ever be invoked, I shall immediately rise to answer the call."

In the Fijār War, hostilities were waged only during a few days every year. During the rest of the year the Arabs returned to their normal occupations. Neither losses in property nor in life were grave enough to change the Makkans' daily routines of trade, usury, wine, women, and other kinds of entertainment. Was this Muhammad's daily routine as well? Or did his poverty and dependence upon his uncle for protection force him to stay away from the luxury and extravagance of his contemporaries? That he kept away from these indulgences is historically certain. That he did so not on account of his poverty is equally certain. The debauchees of Makkah who were hardly capable of providing for themselves the immediate needs of the day could still afford their life of turpitude. Indeed, some of the poorest among them could outdo the nobles of Makkah and the lords of Quraysh. Rather, the soul of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was far too possessed by his will to learn, to discover, and to know, to incline towards any such depravities. His having been deprived as a boy of the learning which was the privilege of the rich made him all the more anxious to learn on his own. His great soul whose light was later to fill the world and whose influence was

to fashion history was so involved in its will to perfection that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) could only turn away from the recreative pursuits of his fellow Makkans. As one already guided by the truth, Muhammad's mind was always turning towards the light of life evident in every one of its manifestations in the world. His constant preoccupation was with the discovery of the underlying truth of life, the perfection of its inner meaning. Ever since he was a youth his conduct was so perfect, manly, and truthful that all the people of Makkah agreed to call him "Al Amin", or "the truthful", "the loyal."

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as Herdsman

Muhammad's occupation as herdsman during the years of his youth provided him with plenty of leisure to ponder and to contemplate. He took care of his family's and neighbors' herds. Later, he used to recall these early days with joy, arid say proudly that "Allah sent no prophet who was not a herdsman ... Moses was a herdsman; David was also a herdsman; I, too, was commissioned to prophethood while I grazed my family's cattle at Ajyād." The intelligent sensitive herdsman would surely find in the vastness of the atmosphere during the day and in the brilliance of the stars during the night fair enticement to thinking and contemplation. He would try to penetrate the skies, to seek an explanation for the manifestations of nature around him. If he were profound enough, his thoughts would bring him to realize that the world around him is not quite separate from the world within him. He would ponder the fact that he takes the atmosphere into his lungs, that without it he would die. He would realize that the light of the sun revives him, that that of the moon guides him, and that he is not without relation to the heavenly bodies of the high and immense firmament. He would ponder the fact that these heavenly bodies are well ordered to-

gether in a precise system in which neither sun overtakes the moon nor night overtakes the day. If the security of this herd of animals demanded his complete and constant attention, if it were to be safeguarded against attack by the wolf and loss in the desert dunes, what supreme attention and what perseverence were needed to guard the order of the universe in all its detail! Such speculative thought can indeed divert man from preoccupation with worldly cares and passions; it can pull him beyond their apparent persuasiveness and appeal. Thus, in all his deeds, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) never allowed anything to detract from his reputation, but answered to every expectation to which his nickname "Al Amin" gave rise.

Further evidence to this effect may be found in the reports Muhammad (P.B.U.H) made about this early period of his life. It is said that while he was a herdsman he had a companion whom he asked to take over his duties while he spent the night in town in some recreation as other youths were wont to do in those days. Before he reached his destination, however, Muhammad's attention was arrested by a wedding in one of the houses on the way. He stopped there to listen to the sounds emanating from the house and fell asleep. He came back to Makkah on another occasion for the same purpose, and again on the way his attention was arrested by the sound of beautiful music. He sat down on the street to listen, and again fell asleep. The temptations of Makkah had no power over the disciplined soul of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) whose prime concern was contemplation. This is not surprising. Far lesser men than Muhammad (P.B.U.H) have also overcome these temptations. He led a life far removed from vice and immorality, and found his pleasures in immersing himself in thought and contemplation.

The Life of Thought and Contemplation

The life of thought is satisfied with very little of the world's wealth and pleasure. Herding cattle and goats never brings much material return, anyway. Material return, however, did not concern Muhammad (P.B.U.H), for he regarded the world stoically and avoided, often with ascetic detachment, pursuing anything beyond the barest needs of survival. Did he not say, "We are a people who do not eat until we become hungry, a people who when sitting to eat would never eat their fill? " Was he not known throughout his life to call men to a life of hardness and himself to lead a life of stoic self-denial? Those who long after wealth and strive hard to obtain it satisfy passions which Muhammad (P.B.U.H) never knew. Muhammad's greatest spiritual pleasure was that of beholding the beauty of the universe and responding to its invitation to ponder and to admire. Such pleasure is known only to the very few, but it was Muhammad's nourishment ever since he was a young child, and it was his only consolation when life began to try him with the unforgettably cruel misfortunes of the death of his father, of his mother, and of his grandfather. Spiritual and intellectual pleasures are free. Their pursuit demands no wealth but requires the moral tautness to direct one's gaze inward, to penetrate one's very essence. Even if Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had never been called to prophethood, his soul would never have allowed him to waste his energy in the pursuit of wealth. He would have been happy to remain as he was-namely, a herdsman—but he would have been a herdsman whose soul encompassed the whole universe and was in turn encompassed by that universe as if he were the very center of it.

Khadijah

As we have said earlier, Muhammad's uncle, Abū Talib, was poor and had many mouths to feed. It was necessary that he find for his nephew a higher paying job than herdsmanship. One day he heard that Khadijah, daughter of Khuwaylid, was hiring men of the Quraysh tribe to work for her in her trade. Khadijah was a tradeswoman of honor and great wealth. She used to hire men to bid and compete in the market on her behalf and rewarded them with a share of the profits. Being of the tribe of Banū Asad and having married twice within the tribe of Banū Makhzum, she had become very rich. Her father Khuwaylid and other people whom she trusted used to help her administer her large wealth. She had turned down several noblemen of Quraysh who asked for her hand, believing that they were after her wealth. Bound to a life of solitude, she had given all her energy to the development of her business. When Abū Talib learned that she was preparing a caravan to send to al Sham, he called his nephew, who was then twenty-five years of age, and said to him, "My nephew, I am a man devoid of wealth and possessions. The times have been hard on us. I have heard that Khadijah has hired a man to do her trade for a remuneration of two young camels. We shall not accept for you remuneration as little as that. Do you wish that I talk to her in this regard? "Muhammad (P.B.U.H) answered, "Let it be as you say, my uncle." Abū Tālib went to Khadijah and said, "0 Khadijah, would you hire Muhammad? We have heard that you have hired a man for the remuneration of two young camels, but we would not accept for Muhammad any less than four." Khadijah answered: "Had you asked this for an alien or a hateful man, I would have granted your request. How then can I turn you down when your request is in favor of a dear relative?" Abū Tālib returned to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and told him the news, adding, "That is a true sustenance from Allah."

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in the Employ of Khadijah

On his first trip in the employ of Khadijah, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was accompanied by Maysarah, her slave, who was also recommended to Muhammad by his uncle. The caravan made its way to al Sham, passing through Wādi al Zahrān, Madyan and Thamūd as well as those spots through which Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had passed once before with his uncle Abū Talib when he was twelve years old. This trip must have recalled to Muhammad the memory of his first trip in that area. It furnished more grist for his thinking and contemplating as he came to know more of the doctrines and rituals of the people of al Sham. When he arrived at Busrah, he came into contact with Syrian Christianity and talked to the monks and priests, some of whom were Nestorians. Perhaps those very priests or some others discussed with him the religion of Jesus which had by then divided itself into several sects and parties. Muhammad's adeptness and loyalty enabled him to make great gains for Khadijah-indeed more than anyone had done before! and his loyalty and gentleness had won for him the love and admiration of the slave, Maysarah. When the time came for them to return, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) bought on behalf of Khadijah all that she 'had asked him to buy of the products of al Sham.

When the caravan had returned to al Zahran near Makkah, Maysarah said to Muhammad (P.B.U.H), "Run to Khadijah, O Muhammad, and bring to her the news of your success. She will reward you well." Muhammad (P.B.U.H) galloped on his camel toward the residence of his employer and arrived there about noon. Khadijah happened to be in an upper story of her house, saw Muhammad (P.B.U.H) coming, and prepared to receive him. She listened to his report— which he must have rendered in his very eloquent style—about his trip, the successes he achieved in his trade, and the goods he had imported from al Sham. She must

have been well pleased with her new employee. Later on, Maysarah arrived and reported to her about Muhammad (P.B.U.H), his gentle treatment of him, and his loyalty to her that confirmed what she had already known of Muhammad's virtue (P.B.U.H) and superiority over the other youths of Makkah. Shortly, despite her forty years of age and the indifference with which she rejected the offers of the noblest of Quraysh, her satisfaction with her employee was to turn into love. She desired to marry this youth whose eloquence and looks had made such a profound impression upon her. According to one version, she intimated her desire to her sister, and according to another, to her friend Nufaysah, daughter of Munyah. Nufaysah approached Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and said, "What prevents you from getting married?" Muhammad (P.B.U.H) answered, "I have no means with which to afford it." She said, "What if you were excused from providing such means and were called by a person of beauty, wealth, status and honor; what would be your response? " He answered, "Who can such a person be?" She said, "Khadijah." Muhammad (P.B.U.H) wondered, "How could that be?" He too had felt inclined toward Khadijah but he never allowed himself to entertain the idea of marrying her. He knew of her rejection of the noblest and wealthiest men of Quraysh. When, therefore, Nufaysah reported to him in answer to his question, "I shall arrange it," he hastened to declare his acceptance. Soon Khadijah appointed the hour at which the uncles of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) could find her people at her home and thus arrange for the completion of the marriage. It was her uncle, 'Umar ibn Asad, who gave her away as her father Khuwaylid had died before the- Fijār War. This fact disproves the claim that Khadijah's father did not agree to the marriage and that his daughter had given him wine in order to extract such agreement from him.

Here a new page in the life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) begins. It is the page of married and family life which had brought great

happiness to him as well as to Khadijah. It was also a page of fatherhood in which he was to suffer the loss of children even as Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had in his childhood suffered the loss of parents.

4

From Marriage to Prophethood

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) married Khadijah and gave her a dowry of twenty young camels. He moved to her house and thus began a new chapter in the life of both. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) offered Khadijah the love of a man of twenty-five, though not the raging passion of youth which is as quickly kindled as cooled or put off. Khadijah gave him sons as well as daughters. The sons, namely al Qasim and 'Abdullah, died in childhood to the great grief of their father. The daughters survived and constantlyr emained the object of Muhammad's love (P.B.U.H) and compassion just as he was the object of their love and devotion.

Muhammad's Qualities (P.B.U.H)

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was handsome of face and of medium build and neither conspicuously tall nor inconspicuously short. He had a large head, very black thick hair, wide forehead, heavy eyebrows, and large black eyes with a slight redness on their sides and long eyelashes to add to their attractiveness. He had a fine nose, well spaced teeth, a thick beard, a long handsome neck, wide chest and shoulders, light colored skin, and thick

palms and feet. He walked resolutely with firm steps. His appearance was always one of deep thought and contemplation. In his eyes there lurked the authority of a commander of men. It is no wonder that Khadijah combined love for him with obedience to his wishes or that she soon excused him from having to administer her trade and took over its reins as she had done before marriage in order to give him leisure to pursue a life of contemplation.

Aided by a marriage which complemented his geneological honor and provided amply for his needs, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) spent his days respected and loved by all the people of Makkah. His family life, numerous offspring, along with the ample provisions he now enjoyed, kept him from falling in public esteem. On the other hand, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had not withdrawn from society, from participating in the public life of Makkah as he did before. His new status added to his prestige among his peers as well as strengthened his already great modesty. Despite his great intelligence and outstanding ability, he listened well and attentively to anyone who spoke to him, never turning his face away from his interlocutor. Whosoever addressed him, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was never satisfied to lend his ear alone but turned to him with all his being. He spoke little, listened much, and inclined only to serious conversation though he did not refuse to share a joke. He always spoke the truth. Sometimes he would laugh until one could see his molars, but his anger could never be recognized except by perspiration between his eyebrows. His anger and fury were always sublimated, and his magnanimity, candidness, and loyalty knew no bounds. He loved to do the good, and was charitable, hospitable, and friendly, as well as resolved and strong willed. Once resolved on a course of action, he was persevering and knew no hesitancy. Whoever came into contact with him was deeply impressed by all these qualities; whoever saw him would immediately fear him; and whoever had anything to do with him,

loved him. All these qualities helped strengthen the bond of loyalty, truthfulness, and love which united him to Khadijah.

Reconstruction of the Ka'bah

We have said that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) did not withdraw from the people of Makkah or from participating in the public life of the city. At the time, the Makkans were preoccupied with the rebuilding of the Ka'bah after a sudden flood had shaken its foundation and cracked its walls. The Ka'bah had for some time been the concern of the Quraysh. It had no ceiling and the treasures it housed were exposed to robbery. The Makkans were afraid, however, that a rebuilding of the Ka'bah with doors and ceilings might bring upon them a curse. The Ka'bah was girded by a series of superstitions designed to frighten the people from ever altering anything that pertained to it. Any such change would have been regarded as forbidden innovation and anathema. When the floods cracked its walls, it was imperative to do something about it despite fear and hesitancy. Coincidentally, a ship coming from Egypt belonging to a Byzantine trader called Pachomius was washed ashore. Pachomius was a builder by trade and knew something of carpentry. When Quraysh heard of him, al Walid ibn al Mughirah headed a delegation of Makkans to Juddah to negotiate with him. They bought from him the ship and commissioned him to come with them to Makkah and help them in the building of the Ka'bah. Pachomius accepted. In Makkah, there resided another Coptic man who knew something of carpentry. They asked him to assist Pachomius and the work began.

Wrecking and Rebuilding the Ka'bah

To everyone of the four clans of Makkah fell the duty of wrecking and rebuilding one of the four walls of the Ka'bah. No one, however, volunteered to begin the work of wrecking for fear of punishment by its gods. Al Walid ibn al Mughirah approaching his task with strong premonitions, prayed to the gods before pulling down part of the Yamani wall assigned to his tribe. The rest waited in order to see what would befall al Walid as a result of his deed. When the morning came and nothing had happened to him, they took courage and began their work. Like the rest, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) carried stones back and forth, and the wrecking continued until the Ka'bah was leveled. Below the walls green stones were found which the Makkans were unable to shake loose. They decided to use them as foundation on which to build the new walls. From the neighboring mountains, they carried stones of blue granite. As the walls rose from the ground and the time came to place the sacred black stone in its place in the east wall, they differed as to who would have the honor of laying it in place. Competition was so keen that it almost led to a new civil war. The descendents of 'Abd al Dār and of 'Adiyy allied themselves together and swore that none would rob them of this honor. They were so serious in their resolution that members of the clan of Banū 'Abd al Dār brought a bowl full of blood in which they dipped their hands in confirmation of their solemn oath. For this act they were later called "the bloodmongers". When Ahū Umayyah, son of Mughirah al Makhzumi saw what happened, he took advantage of his power and prestige and said to the Makkans, "While we are all standing here, let the first one to pass through the gate of al Suffah be our arbitrator in this dispute." The first one to pass through the gate was Muhammad (P.B.U.H). When they beheld him they said, "There goes al Amin. We shall agree with his

verdict." Realizing, as he listened to them, that the contenders had worked themselves up into a passion,

Muhammad's verdict in the Black stone:

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) thought for a moment and said, "Bring me a robe." He took the robe they brought, spread it on the ground and placed the black stone on it and then said, "Let the elders of each clan hold onto one edge of the robe." They all complied and together carried the stone to the site of construction. There, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) picked up the stone and laid it in its place by himself. Bloodshed was thus averted and the dispute was solved. The Quraysh completed the building of the Ka'bah, raising its walls to a height of eighteen cubits. In order to make it more defensible, they raised its entrance above ground level. Inside the Ka'bah, they erected two parallel rows of three pillars each to support the ceiling and built a stairway on its north side leading to the roof. Hubal, the idol was placed inside the Ka'bah together with all the treasures whose security concerned the Makkans.

There is disagreement about the age of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) at the time of the rebuilding of the Ka'bah and of his arbitration between the Quraysh clans concerning the black stone. While some claimed that he was twenty-five years old, Jbn Ishaq reported him to be thirty-five. Regardless which of the two claims is true, the acceptance by the Quraysh of his arbitration and verdict—as well as his taking over the stone with his own hands and laying it down first on the robe and then in its place in the wall—all this proves the very high prestige Muhammad (P.B.U.H) enjoyed among all Makkans as well as appreciation by his fellow countrymen for his objectivity and candidness of purpose.

Dissolution of Authority in Makkah and its Effects

The foregoing dispute between the clans, the alliance of "the bloodmongers," and the recourse to arbitration by the first man to pass through the gates of al Suffah, all proved that public

power and authority in Makkah had by that time dissolved and that none of the absolute power of Qusayy, Hāshim, or 'Abd al Muttalib had passed to any Makkan. Undoubtedly, this dissolution was furthered by the power struggle between Banū Hāshim and Banu Umayyah after the death of 'Abd al Muttalib. Such dissolution of public power and authority was bound to harm the city sooner or later were it not for the sanctified status of the ancient house and the awe and reverence it commanded in the hearts of all Arabs. Nonetheless, a natural consequence of political dissolution was the noticeable increase in the liberty of many to speak out their religious and other views. It was equally evident in the boldness of Jews and Christians, hitherto living in fear, publically to criticise Arab idolatry. This dissolution of public power also contributed to the gradual disappearance among large numbers of Qurayshis of their old veneration of the idols, though their elders continued at least to appear to respect them. Anxious to safeguard the old ways, the elders held that to stabilize the situation and to prevent further deterioration of Makkan unity, idol worship in the Ka'bah might preserve for Makkah its place in the trade relations and religious life of Arabia. In fact, Makkah continued to benefit from this position of religious eminence, and its commerce continued to prosper. In the hearts of the Makkans themselves, however, Makkan prosperity could not for long impede the deterioration and final disappearance of idol worship.

Dissolution of Idol Worship

It is reported that one day the Quraysh tribe convened at a place called Nakhlah to celebrate the day of the goddess al 'Uzzā. Four Qurayshis failed to show up and participate in this sacrament: namely, Zayd ibn 'Amr, 'Uthmān ibn al Huwayrith, 'Ubayd Allah ibn Jahsh and Waraqah ibn Nawfal. They are

reported to have addressed one another in these words, "Mark well these words! By God, the people are unworthy and surely misguided. As for us, we shall circumambulate no stone which neither hears nor sees, which is capable of neither harm nor good and on which the blood of sacrifice runs. 0 people, seek for yourselves a religion other than this! "Waraqah joined Christianity, and it is reported that he translated into Arabic some of the contents of the Evangels. 'Ubayd Allah ibn Jahsh remained a man without religion until he joined Islam and emigrated with his fellow Muslims to Abyssinia. There it is reported that he joined Christianity and died a Christian. His wife Umm Habibah, daughter of Aba Sufyan, remained a Muslim. She returned to Madinah and became one of the wives of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and a "Mother of the Faithful." As for Zayd ibn 'Amr, he separated himself from his wife and from his uncle al Khattāb, lived for a while in al Sham and 'Iraq and returned to Arabia without ever joining either Judaism or Christianity. He also separated himself from Makkan religion and avoided the idols. Leaning on the walls of the Ka'bah he used to pray, "0 Allah! If I knew in which form you preferred to be worshipped, I would surely worship you in that form." Finally, as for 'Uthmān ibn al Huwayrith, a relative of Khadijah, he traveled to Byzantium, became a Christian and, for some time, achieved a position of eminence in the imperial court. It is said that he sought to subjugate Makkah to Byzantium and to get himself appointed as the emperor's viceroy. The Makkans finally banished him from Makkah. He joined the Ghassānis in al Sham. From there he sought to cut off the trade route of Makkah, but the Makkans undid his schemes by sending all sorts of gifts to the Ghassāni court. There, ibn al Huwayrith died by being poisoned.

Muhammad's Sons (P.B.U.H)

The years passed while Muhammad (P.B.U.H) participated

in the public life of Makkah and found in Khadijah, the loving woman who gave him many children, the best of all woman companions. She gave him two sons, al Qasim and 'Abdullah-the last of whom was nicknamed al Tāhir and al Tayyib-and four daughters, Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthūm and Fatimah. Hardly anything is known of alQasim and 'Abdullah except that they died before the coming of Islam, while still infants. Undoubtedly their loss caused their parents great grief and affected them deeply. As their mother, Khadijah must have received a permanent wound at their loss. She must have turned to her idols, inquisitively asking why the gods did not have mercy on her, and why they did not prevent her happiness from repeated shipwreck by the loss of her children. Certainly, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) must have shared her grief and unhappiness. It is not difficult for us to imagine the depth of their tragedy in an age when daughters used to be buried alive and male descendants were sought after as the substance of life itself-indeed more. Sufficient proof of this grief is the fact that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) could not last long without a male heir. When he saw Zayd ibn Hārithah offered for sale, he asked Khadijah to buy him; no sooner was the new slave bought than Muhammad (P.B.U.H) manumitted and adopted him as a son. He was called Zayd ibn Muhammad, lived under his protection, and became one of his best followers and companions. There was yet more grief ahead for Muhammad (P.B.U.H) when his third son Ibrahim passed away in the Islamic period, after Islam had prohibited the burial of live daughters and declared paradise to stand under the feet of mothers. It is not surprising, therefore, that Muhammad's losses in his children should leave their deep mark upon his life and thought. He must have been quite shocked when on each of these tragic occasions, Khadijah turned to the idols of the Ka'bah, and sacrificed to Hubal, to al Lāt, al 'Uzzā, and.Manat in the hope that these deities would intercede on her behalf and prevent the loss of her children. But

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) must have then realized the vanity and futility of these hopes and efforts in his tragic bereavement and great sorrow.

Muhammad's Daughters (P.B.U.H)

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) took care to marry his daughters to good husbands. He married Zaynab, the eldest, to Abu al 'As ibn al Rabi' ibn 'Abd Shams, whose mother was Khadijah's sister, and who was an upright and successful citizen. This marriage proved a happy one despite the separation of the two spouses following Zaynab's emigration to Madinah after Islam, as we shall see later. He married Ruqayyah and Umm Kultham to 'Utbah and 'Utaybah, the sons of his uncle Abū Lahab. These marriages did not last, for soon after the advent of Islam, Abū Lahab ordered his two sons to divorce their wives. It was 'Uthmān that married both of them one after the other. Fāti mah, who was still a child, did not marry 'Ali until after Islam.

Still, Muhammad's life (P.B.U.H) during these years was one of well being, peace, and security. Were it not for the loss of his sons, it would have been a very happy one blessed with progeny and Khadijah's constant love and loyalty. During this period it was natural for Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to allow his soul to wander, his mind and imagination to contemplate and to listen to the Makkan dialogue concerning their religion, to Jews and Christians concerning theirs, as well as to the latter's critique of Makkan religion. He could afford to give these problems his time and energy and to concern himself with them far more than could his compatriots. Endowed with such penetrating insight and prepared for conveying the Divine message to mankind and ready for guiding their spiritual life to the true path, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) could not enjoy his peace and security while men sank in misguidance and untruth. It was necessary for such a soul as

he had to seek the truth perennially and everywhere, for only by such seeking and soul searching would it receive that which Allah was about to reveal. Despite this keen and noble obsession with the spiritual, this natural impulsion to religion, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) never sought to become a priest nor a wise counsellor, such as Waraqah ibn Nawfal and others were, to whom men ran for advice. Rather he sought first to convince himself of the truth, not to pass it on to others. Consequently, he spent long intervals alone, completely absorbed in his thoughts and meditation, and hardly ever given to communicating his ideas to anyone.

The Arabs' Annual Retreat

It was Arabia's custom at the time for the pious and thoughtful to devote a period of each year to a retreat of worship, asceticism, and prayer. They would seek an empty place far away from their people where they could concentrate on their prayers and genuinely seek a new level of seriousness, wisdom, and ethical goodness through meditation. This practice was called *tahannnth* or *tahannuf.* Therein Muhammad (P.B.U.H) found the best means of satisfying his will to thinking and meditating. In its solitude he could find a measure of spiritual detachment and peace that would enable his consciousness to screen the whole universe for inspiration and to pursue his thought wherever it might lead. At the head of Mount Hirā', two miles north of Makkah, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) discovered a cave whose perfect silence and total separation from Makkah made of it a perfect place for retreat. In that cave Muhammad (P.B.U.H) used to spend the whole month of Ramadan. He would satisfy himself with the least provisions, carried to him from time to time by a servant, while devoting himself uninterruptedly to his spiritual pursuits in peace, solitude and tranquility. His devotion

often caused him to forget himself, to forget his food, and, indeed, to forget the whole world around him. At these moments the very world and existence must have appeared to him like a dream. Through his mind he would turn the pages of all that he had heard and learned, and his search could only whet his appetite for the truth.

Groping after Truth

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) did not hope to find the truth he sought in the narratives of the rabbis or the scriptures of the monks but in the very world surrounding him, in the sky and its stars, moon, and sun, and in the desert with its burning air under the brilliant sun—its impeccable purity enclosed by the light of the moon or that of the stars in the balmy night, in the sea with its countless waves, and in all that which underlies this existence and constitutes its unity of being. It was in the world that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) sought to discover the supreme truth. He sought to unite his soul to it, to penetrate it, and to grasp the secret of its being. He did not take much thought to realize that his peoples' understanding of the nature of this world, of their religiosity and devotion, was all false. Their idols were mere stones—speechless, thoughtless, and powerless. Hubal, al Lat, and al 'Uzzã, as well as every one of these idols and statues inside or around the Ka'bah, had never created even so much as a fly and never did Makkah any good. Where was to be found the truth in this vast universe of infinite skies and stars? Is it in the brilliant stars which give men their light and warmth and sends them rain? Is it in their water, the light and warmth as sources of life to all mankind throughout the world? No! For all these are creatures like the earth itself. Is the truth then behind the sky and their stars, in the boundless space beyond? But what is space? And what is this life which is today and is gone tomor-

row? What is its origin and source? Is this world and our presence therein all a mere accident? The world and its life have, however, immutable laws which cannot be the product of circumstances. Men do good and they do evil. But do they do it willingly and deliberately, or is their action a mere instinct which they are powerless to control? It was of such spiritual and psychological problems that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) thought during his solitary retreat in the cave of Hirā', and it was in the totality of spirit and life that he sought to discover the truth. His ideas filled his soul, his heart, his consciousness, indeed all his being. This paramount occupation diverted him from the commonplace problems of everyday. When at the end of Ramadān, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) returned to Khadijah, his perturbed thoughts showed on his face and caused Khadijah to inquire whether he was well.

In his devotions during that retreat, did Muhammad (P.B.U.H) follow any one of the known religious schools? That is a question on which scholars disagree. In his *Al Kāmil fi al Tārikh,* ibn Kathir reported some of the current views in answer to this question. Some claimed that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) followed the law of Noah; others, the law of Ibrahim; others, the law of Moses; others the law of Jesus. Others claimed that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had followed every known law and observed it. Perhaps this last claim is nearer to the truth than the others, for it agrees with what we know of Muhammad's constant (P.B.U.H) search for answers and for ways to the truth.

The True Vision

Whenever the year revolved and the month of Ramadan arrived, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) would return to the cave of Hira' for meditation with a soul yet more ripe and more concerned. After years of preoccupation with such problems, Muhammad

(P.B.U.H) began to see in his dreams visions of the truth he sought. Contrasted with these visions, the illusory character of this life and the vanity of its ornaments became especially apparent. He had become perfectly convinced that his people had gone utterly astray and that their spiritual lives had been corrupted by their idols and the false beliefs associated with them. He was also convinced that neither the Jews nor the Christians had anything to offer that would save his people from their misguidance. Some truth there certainly was in the claims of both Judaism and Christianity, but there was also a fair measure of falsehood and illusion, of outright paganism, which could not possibly agree with the simple absolute truth beyond all the barren dialectics and futile controversies in which Christians as well as Jews indulged. This simple absolute truth is Allah, Creator of the universe, other than Whom there is no God. The truth is that Allah is Lord of the universe, that He is the Compassionate and the Merciful, and that men are responsible for their deeds.

﴿ فَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُۥ وَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُۥ﴾ سورة الزلزلة الآيتان ٧ـ ٨

(Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it! And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it.) (Al-Zalzalah:7-8)

The truth is that paradise and hell are true; that those who worship other gods than Allah shall dwell in hell and suffer eternal punishment.

When Muhammad (P.B.U.H) retreated into the cave of Hirā' as he approached the fortieth year of his age, his soul was fully convinced of the vision of truth he had seen. His mind was cleansed of all illusion and falsehood. His soul was well

disciplined by the search for truth and devotion to it. His whole being was now oriented toward the eternal truth and his whole life was devoted to the pursuit of its path. He had prayed with all his power that Allah might deliver his people from their misguidance and error. In his retreat he prayed day and night and fasted long periods. He would come down from the cave for a stroll on the desert highway and then return to his retreat, always rethinking, contemplating and reconsidering. This continued for six whole months while Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was unable to tear himself away. Naturally he was scared and intimated to his wife, Khadijah, the fear that he might even be possessed by an evil spirit. His loving and loyal wife reassured him, reminding that he was al Amin" [*i.e.,* the faithful], that evil spirits could not approach him precisely because of his faith and strong morality. It had never occurred to either that Allah was preparing His chosen one by means of all these spiritual exercises for a truly great day, the day of the great news, the day of the first revelation. It did not occur to them that Allah was preparing His Prophet (P.B.U.H) for prophethood.

The Beginning of Revelation (610 C.E.)

One day, while Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was asleep in the cave, an angel approached with a sheet in his hand. The angel said to Muhammad (P.B.U.H), "Read." Muhammad (P.B.U.H) answered in surprise, "What shall I read? " He felt as if the angel had strangled and then released him and heard once more the command, "Read." Muhammad's reply was, "What shall I read?" Once more he felt the angel strangling and then releasing him, and he heard him repeat the command, "Read." For the third time Muhammad (P.B.U.H) answered, "What shall I read?" fearful that this time the strangling would be stronger. The angel replied,

﴿ ٱقْرَأْ بِٱسْمِ رَبِّكَ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ ۝ خَلَقَ ٱلْإِنسَـٰنَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۝ ٱقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ ٱلْأَكْرَمُ ۝ ٱلَّذِى عَلَّمَ بِٱلْقَلَمِ ۝ عَلَّمَ ٱلْإِنسَـٰنَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ۝ ﴾

سورة العلق الآيات ١ـ٥

(Proclaim! (or Read!) In the name of your Lord and Cherisher, Who created,

Created man, out of a leech-like clot: Proclaim! and your Proclaim! and your Lord is Most Bountiful, He Who taught (the use of) the Pen, Taught man that which he knew not.) (Al-Alaq: 1-5)

"Muhammad (P.B.U.H) recited these verses, repeating them after the angel who withdrew after they were permanently carved upon his memory.

Thus the earliest of the biographies reported, and so did ibn Ishaq. Many of the Muhaddithun [*i.e.,* "reporters of the Prophet's traditions" (P.B.U.H) -Tr.] have reported likewise. Some of them have claimed that the beginning of revelation was in the hours of wakefulness, and they mention a ***hadith*** to the effect that Gabriel first said words of reassurance to assuage Muhammad's fear at his appearance. In his ***Al Kāmil fi at Tarikh,*** Ibn Kathir gave a quotation from the book, ***Dalā'il at Nubuwuah*** by Abu Na'im al Isbahāni, in which the latter reported that 'Alqamah ibn Qays had said, "The first Revelations come to the prophets in their sleep until their hearts are reassured. Thereafter, revelation comes any time of the day or night." To this report Abu Na'im added, "This report comes to me from 'Alqamah ibn Qays in person. It is sound and reasonable, and it is corroborated by that which comes before and after it."

Muhammad's Fear

Stricken with panic, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) arose and asked himself, "What did I see? Did possession of the devil which I feared all along come to pass? "Muhammad (P.B.U.H) looked to his right and his left but saw nothing. For a while he stood there trembling with fear and stricken with awe. He feared the cave might be haunted and that he might run away still unable to explain what he saw. He walked in the area around the mountain asking himself who could have commanded him to read. Until that day in his retreat, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) used to have visions of the truth dawning upon him after his meditation and filling his consciousness with great light.. In these visions, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was guided to the truth, his doubts were dissolved, and the darkness which had enveloped the Quraysh in their idol worship was exposed. This light that illuminated the way in front of him was that of the truth which provided him with true guidance. It was the One and only God. But who was this who came to remind Muhammad (P.B.U.H) of Him, that He had created man, and that He was the most gracious who taught man by the pen that which he does not know? Pursued by his own questioning and still trembling in fear of what he had seen and heard in the cave, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) stopped in the middle of the road when the same voice called to him from above. Mesmerized in his place, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) lifted his head toward heaven. He saw the angel in the form of a human giant across the sky. For a moment he sought to escape, but wherever he looked or ran, the angel stood right there before him. In his absence from the cave a messenger from Khadijah looked for him and could not find him. Filled with what he had seen, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) returned home once the angel disappeared. His state was one of extreme dread. He had literally experienced the *Mysterium Tremendum et Fascinans.*

Khadijah, the Faithful

As Muhammad (P.B.U.H) entered his house he asked Khadijah to wrap him in blankets. She could see that her husband was shivering as if struck with high fever. When he calmed down, he cast toward his wife the glance of a man in need of rescue and said, "0 Khadijah, what has happened to me?" He told her of his experience and intimated to her his fear that his mind had finally betrayed him, and that he was becoming a seer or a man possessed. Khadijah was still the same angel of mercy, peace, and reassurance she had always been. As she did on earlier occasions when Muhammad (P.B.U.H) feared possession by the devil, she now stood firm by her husband and devoid of the slightest doubt. Respectfully, indeed reverently, she said to him, "Joy to my cousin! Be firm. By him who dominates Khadijah's soul I pray and hope that you will be the Prophet of this nation. By Allah, He will not let you down. You will be kind to your kin; your speech will all be true; you will rescue the weary; entertain the guest and help the truth to prevail."

Reassured, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) thanked Khadijah and was grateful for her faith. Exhausted, he fell asleep. This sleep was to be followed by a spiritual life of utmost strength, a life whose sublimity and beauty was to confront each and every mind. His life was to be dedicated purely to Allah, to truth, and to humanity. He was being commissioned to convey to man the message of His lord. He was to carry out his charge not by force, but by argument yet more gentle, sound and more convincing than any man has known. Despite every unbeliever, the light of Allah and His guidance will yet fill the world.

5

From the Beginning of Revelation to the Conversion of 'Umar

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) lapsed into perfect sleep while Khadijah's eyes, full of compassion and hope, were pinned on him. She withdrew from his room pensive and restless at what she had just heard. She looked to the morrow hoping that her husband would become the Prophet (P.B.U.H) of this Arab nation long lost in error. She wished her husband could bring his people to the religion of truth and blaze for them the path of goodness and virtue. But she was very apprehensive of that morrow, fearful for the good of her loving and faithful husband. She reviewed in her mind the events he had reported to her, and imagined the beautiful angel arpearing to her husband across the sky after conveying to him the words of His Lord. She tried to imagine the angel perched in the sky so that, following Muhammad's description, wherever one looked one could not lose sight of him, and she recalled the holy words which Muhammad recited to her after they had been carved on his memory. As she reviewed all this she may have at one moment smiled with hope and conviction and later frowned with fear for what might have befallen her husband. She could not bear her

solitude long, and the alternation of sweet hope and bitter fear overpowered her. She therefore thought to divulge what she knew to someone sure of insight and wisdom who could give her some advice and good counsel.

The Conversation of Waraqah and Khadijah

KhadIjah ran to her cousin Waraqah ibn Nawfal who, as we saw earlier, had already become a Christian and had translated part of the Evangel into Arabic. When she finished telling him what Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had seen and heard and of her compassionate and hopeful response to her husband, Waraqah broke into these words: "Holy, Holy! By Him who dominates Waraqah's soul, if your report is true, 0 Khadijah, this must be the Great Spirit that spoke to Moses. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) must be the Prophet of this nation. Tell him that he must be firm." Khadijah returned home and found Muhammad (P.B.U.H) still asleep. For a while, she stared at him lovingly, faithfully, and hopefully. Suddenly she noticed that he was shivering, breathing deeply and perspiring. As he opened his eyes, he heard the angel say,

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْمُدَّثِّرُ ﴿١﴾ قُمْ فَأَنذِرْ ﴿٢﴾ وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ ﴿٣﴾ وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ ﴿٤﴾ وَٱلرُّجْزَ فَٱهْجُرْ ﴿٥﴾ وَلَا تَمْنُن تَسْتَكْثِرُ ﴿٦﴾ وَلِرَبِّكَ فَٱصْبِرْ ﴿٧﴾ ﴾

سورة المدثر الآيات ١-٧

(O you wrapped up (in a mantle)! Arise and deliver your warning! And your Lord do magnify! And your garments keep free from stain! And all abomination shun! Nor expect, in giving, any increase (for yourself)! But, for thy Lord's (Cause) be patient and constant!) (Al-Muddaththir: 1-7)

Seeing him in this state, Khadijah pleaded that he returns to his bed and resume his rest. But Muhammad (P.B.U.H) sprang to his feet and said to her, "The time of slumber and rest is past, 0 Khadijah. Gabriel has commanded me to warn men and to call them to Allah and to His worship. But whom shall I call? And who will listen to me?" Khadijah tried to appease and reassure him, to encourage him with predictions of success. She told him what she had heard from Waraqah and declared to him her *Islam, and* her faith in his prophethood.

It was natural for Khadijah to be the first one to believe in Muhammad (P.B.U.H). For many long years she had known him to be the examplar of truthfulness, fidelity, honesty, charity, and compassion. In his many retreats during the last few years, she had noticed how he had been constantly preoccupied with the search for the truth, with the truth alone; how he had sought that truth with his heart, mind, and spirit beyond the idolatrous superstitions of the people and their sacrifices, and beyond the deities that are capable of neither good nor evil but which the people venerated without avail. She had witnessed his great doubt and utter perplexity on his return from the cave of Hirā' after the first revelation. She asked him to tell her when the angel would come. When he did she seized Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and placed him on her left leg, then on her right leg, then in her lap, always asking him whether he was still seeing the angel and Muhammad (P.B.U.H) answering in the affirmative. She then uncovered herself and threw off her clothes and asked Muhammad (P.B.U.H) whether he still saw the angel, but the angel then disappeared. At this her doubt that the appearance was that of the devil rather than of the angel was dissolved once and for all.

Waraqah and Muhammad (P.B.U.H)

One day Muhammad (P.B.U.H) went to the Ka'bah for circumambulation. He was met by Waraqah ibn Nawfal, who

asked him about himself. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) related the events as they had happened. When he finished, Waraqah said, "By Him Who dominates my soul I swear that you are the Prophet of this nation. The great spirit that has come to Moses has now come to you. You will be denied and you will be hurt. You will be abūsed and you will be pursued. If I should ever live to see that day I shall surely help the cause of Allah. Allah knows that I will." Waraqah then approached Muhammad (P.B.U.H) kissed his forehead and went away. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) realized the faithfulness of Waraqah and at the same time felt the burden weighing on his shoulder. Waraqah's warning that the struggle ahead would be hard only confirmed Muhammad's fears (P.B.U.H) that the Quraysh were so attached to their false beliefs that they would fight to death for them. How could he fight them when they were his very people, his nearest relatives?

Surely the Makkans were mistaken. Just as surely, it was to the truth that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was now calling them. He was calling them to transcend themselves, to commune with Allah Who created them as well as their parents, and to worship Him alone in purity and faith. He called them to bring themselves near to Allah with good works, to give the neighbor and the wayfarer his due, and to reject the worship of those idols which they had taken as gods who overlooked their vices and immorality, their usury and robbery of orphans. But in doing all this, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was calling men whose minds and hearts were petrified and hardened beyond the stones to which their idol worship oriented them. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) called men to consider the sky and the earth and all therein which created, to perceive all this in its sublimity and gravity and grasp the laws by which heaven and earth exist. Muhammad(P.B.U.H) called men to rise, through their worship of the sole Creator of all existence, beyond all that is mean and unworthy, to treat the misguided lovingly and to help him achieve proper guidance, to

bring charity and goodness to every orphan, to the weak, the oppressed, and the poor.

Yes, to all this did Allah command Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to call men. But these obstinate souls, these coarse hearts, had committed themselves to remain forever loyal to the religion of the ancestors. Around this religion they had built trade relations which gave Makkah its eminence and centrality as a center of pilgrimage. Would the Makkans abjure the religion of their ancestors and expose their city to loss of prestige, a loss which would surely follow if all idol worship were to stop? Even if such a renunciation were possible, how could their hearts be purified of their chronic passion for every pleasure? How could they be lifted above the animal satisfaction of these passions? Muhammad (P.B.U.H) called men to rise above their passions and above their idols. But what if they didn't respond to his call and refused to believe in him? What would he do?

Subsiding of the Revelations

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) expected the Revelations to guide his path from day to day, but they subsided. Gabriel did not appear for some time and all around him there was nothing but silence. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) fell into solitude separated from himself as well as from the people. His old fears recurred. It is told that even KhadIjah said to him, "Does it not seem that your Lord is displeased with you?" Dismayed and frightened, he returned to the mountain and the cave of Hirā'. There, he prayed for Allah fervently, seeking assiduously to reach Him. Particularly, he wanted to ask Allah about the cause of this Divine displeasure. Khadijah did not dread these days any less than Muhammad (P.B.U.H) nor was she any less fearful. Often Muhammad (P.B.U.H) wished to die, but he would again feel the call and the command of his Lord which dispelled such ideas. It was also

told that he once thought of throwing himself down from the top of Mount Hirā' or Mount Abu Qubays, thinking what good was this life if his greatest hope therein was to be frustrated and destroyed? Torn between these fears on one hand and despair on the other, revelation came to him after a long interval. The word of Allah was as clear as it was reassuring:

﴿ وَٱلضُّحَىٰ (١) وَٱلَّيۡلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ (٢) مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ (٣)
وَلَلۡأٓخِرَةُ خَيۡرٞ لَّكَ مِنَ ٱلۡأُولَىٰ (٤) وَلَسَوۡفَ يُعۡطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرۡضَىٰٓ (٥)
أَلَمۡ يَجِدۡكَ يَتِيمٗا فَـَٔاوَىٰ (٦) وَوَجَدَكَ ضَآلّٗا فَهَدَىٰ (٧) وَوَجَدَكَ
عَآئِلٗا فَأَغۡنَىٰ (٨) فَأَمَّا ٱلۡيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقۡهَرۡ (٩) وَأَمَّا ٱلسَّآئِلَ فَلَا تَنۡهَرۡ (١٠)
وَأَمَّا بِنِعۡمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثۡ (١١) ﴾ سورة الضحى الآيات ١-١١

(By the Glorious morning Light, And by the Night when it is still, your Guardian-Lord has not forsaken you, nor is He displeased. And verily the Hereafter will be better for you than the present.

And soon will your Guardian-Lord give you (that wherewith) you shall be well-pleased. Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter (and care)? And He found you wandering, and He gave you guidance. And He found you in need, and made you independent. Therefore treat not the orphan with harshness, Nor repulse him who asks But the Bounty of your Lord; Rehearse and proclaim!)

(Ad-duha: 1-11)

The Call to Truth Alone

Oh, what Divine majesty, what peace of mind, what joy of heart and exaltation to the soul! Muhammad's fears (P.B.U.H) dissolved and his dread was dissipated. He was overjoyed with this fresh evidence of his Lord's blessing and fell down in worship to Allah and praise of Him. There was no more i'eason to fear, as Khadijah had done, that Allah was displeased with him, and there was no cause for his dread. Allah had now taken him under His protection and removed from him every doubt and fear. Henceforth there was to be no thought of suicide but only of a life dedicated to calling men unto Allah and unto allah alone. To the Almighty God on High shall all men bend their brows. To Him shall all that is in heaven and earth prostrate themselves. He alone is the True, and all that they worship besides him is false. To Him alone the heart should turn, on Him alone the soul should depend, and in Him alone the spirit should find its confirmation. The other realm is better for man than this realm. In the other realm, the soul becomes aware of all being as well as the unity of being; and in this unity space and time disappear and the needs and considerations of this realm are forgotten. It is in the other realm that the forenoon with its brilliant and dazzling sun, the night with its widespread darkness, the heavens and the stars, and the earth and the mountains all become one; and the spirit which enters into awareness of this unity is happy and felicitous. That is the life which is the objective of this life. And that is the truth which illuminated with its light the soul of Muhammad (P.B.U.H). When Revelation subsided for a while, it was this truth which inspired him a new to solicit and think of his Lord and to call men unto Him. The calling of men unto Allah demands the purification of oneself, the shunning of evil, and the bearing with patience all the harm and injury with which the caller may meet. It demands that he illumine the path of true knowledge for the

benefit of ignorant mankind, that he never rebuke the inquisitive, and that he never reject the man in need or oppress the orphan. Sufficient unto him must be the fact that Allah had chosen him to convey His message to mankind. Let this message then be the permanent subject of his conversation. Sufficient unto him must be the fact that Allah had found him an orphan and given him shelter under the protection of his grandfather, 'Abd al Muttalib, and his uncle, Aba Tālib. Sufficient unto him must be the fact that Allah had found him in want and provided for him through his trustworthiness, and had shown him His favor by granting to him Khadijah, the companion of his youth, of his solitude and retreat, oi his prophetic mission, and of love and kindness. Sufficient unto him must he the fact that Allah had found him erring and had guided him to the truth through His message. All this must be sufficient unto him. Let him now call to the truth and exert himself as heartily as he could. Such was the command of Allah to His Prophet (P.B.U.H) whom He had chosen, whom He had not forsaken, and with whom He was not displeased.

Salät [Islamic Worship]

Allah taught His prophet (P.B.U.H) how to worship. In turn Muhammad (P.B.U.H) taught Khadljah, and both worshipped together. Besides their own daughters, 'All ibn Abū Tālib, who was still a boy, lived with them in the same house. 'All's residence with Muhammad (P.B.U.H) dated from the time that Makkah suffered from economic depression. Since Abū Tālib had a very large family, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) approached his uncle al 'Abbās, who was the richest member of the Banū Hāshim clan, saying, "Your brother Abū Tālib has a very large family, and he is in a state of want as a result of this depression. Let us together lighten his burden and take into our homes some of his children." Al 'Abbās agreed and took into his care Ja'far, and Muhammad (P.B.U.H) took 'Ali. One day while Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and Khadijah were worshipping together, 'All entered

their room suddenly and found them kneeling and prostrating themselves and reciting together some of the Qur'ānic Revelations. Surprised at this behavior, the youth stood still at the door until the pair finished their prayer. To his question, "To whom did you prostrate yourselves?" Muhammad (P.B.U.H) answered, "We have prostrated ourselves to God Who has sent me a prophet and Who has commanded me to call men unto Him."

The conversion of Ali:

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) then invited his nephew to worship Allah alone without associates, and to enter into the religion that He had revealed to His Prophet (P.B.U.H). He asked him to repudiate the idols, like al Lāt and al 'Uzzā, and recited to him something from the Qur'ān. 'Ali was overwhelmed. The beauty and sublimity of the verses he heard gripped him. He pleaded for time to consult his father. After a tempestuous night, 'Ali rushed to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and Khadijah and declared to them his conversion without consulting his father. The youth said, "Allah created me without consulting Abu Talib, my father. Why should I now consult him in order to worship Allah?" 'Ali was then the first youth to enter Islam. He was followed by Zayd ibn Hārithah, Muhammad's client. Islam remained limited to one house. Besides Muhammad himself (P.B.U.H), the converts of the new faith were his wife, his cousin, and his client. The problem of how to call Quraysh to the new faith continued to press for a solution. Considering how attached the Makkans were to the religion of their ancestors and to their idols, and how fiercely they resisted any innovation, there was no easy solution in sight.

The Conversion of Abū Bakr

Abū Bakr ibn Abū Quhafah al Taymi was a very close friend to Muhammad (P.B.U.H). He trusted Muhammad (P.B.U.H),

whom he knew to be worthy of this trust, and whose truthfulness was, as far as Aba Bakr was concerned, beyond doubt. Outside Muhammad's own household (P.B.U.H), Abu Bakr was the first man to be called to the worship of Allah alone and to the repudiation of idols. He was the first outsider to whom Muhammad (P.B.U.H) confided the vision he had seen and the Revelations he had heard. Abū Bakr did not hesitate to respond favorably to the call of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and to believe therein. But what soul would hesitate to leave idol worship for the worship of Allah alone if it were open at all to the voice of truth? What soul would prefer the worship of stones to the worship of Allah if it were endowed with any kind of nobility and transcendent awareness? What soul would resist self-purification, giving of one's bounty and doing good to the orphan, if it had any degree of innate purity and goodness? Abu Bakr broadcast his conversion and new faith in Allah and in His Prophet (P.B.U.H) among his companions. He was "a good man and a noble character, friendly to his people, and amiable and gentle. He enjoyed the noblest lineage in Quraysh and was the most knowledgeable of its clans and geneologies and its past and present history. Better than any other member of the tribe, he knew its strengths and weaknesses. By profession he was a trader, well known and honest. His people loved him and respected him for his knowledge, his honesty and his entertaining conversation." Abu Bakr began to call unto Islam those of his people whom he trusted, and a number of them were converted. 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, 'Abd al Rahman ibn 'Awf, Talhah ibn 'Ubayd Allah, Sa'd ibn Aby Waqqas, and al Zubayr ibn alAwwām were the first to respond favorably to his cause. Thereafter Abū 'Ubaydah ibn al Jarrāh was converted as well as a number of other Makkans. Whenever a man converted to Islam, he would seek the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and declare his Islam to him and receive from him his instruction. Fearful of arousing the enmity and antagonism of Quraysh for their departure from idol worship, the new Muslims used to hide the fact of their conversion. They would go to the outskirts of Makkah in order to hold their prayers. For three years while

Islam continued to spread among the Makkans, the Muslims continued to hide. In the meantime, the Qur'ān was continually being revealed to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and this fortified the Muslims in their faith and confirmed them in it.

The personal example of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was the best support for the spread of his cause. He was merciful and charitable, humble yet manly, sweet of word yet just, giving to each his due yet full of compassion and sympathy for the weak, the orphan, the deprived, and the oppressed. In his nightwatch and prayer, in his chanting the Qur'ān Revealed to him, in his constant scrutinizing of the heavens and of the earth, he looked for the meaning of their existence and that of everything they contain; in his permanent orientation toward Allah alone, in his search for the meaning of existence and quintessence of life, deep within his own soul, he provided such an example for his followers that they became ever more convinced of their faith and ever more anxious to adhere to its precepts. The new Muslims did so notwithstanding the fact that they were repudiating the religion and practice of their ancestors as well as exposing themselves to injury by those who believed otherwise. Many noblemen and tradesmen from Makkah believed in Muhammad (P.B.U.H), but all were already known for their purity, honesty, kindness, and mercy. In addition, Muslim ranks included many converts from the weak, deprived, and oppressed classes of Makkah. The cause of Allah and His Prophet (P.B.U.H) spread as men and women entered the faith wave after wave.

The Muslims and Quraysh

People talked about Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his message. The obdurate and hard-hearted among the Makkans did not pay much attention to him, thinking that his cause would not go

beyond what they had known of the causes of Quss, Umayyah, Waraqah, and others among the wise men and priests. They were certain men will eventually return to the religion of their ancestors, and that victory would finally belong to Hubal, al Lāt, al 'Uzzā, Isāf, and Nā'ilah. But they forgot that candid faith is invincible and that the truth must someday prevail.

Muhammad's Nearest Relatives (P.B.U.H)

Three years after the Revelation began, Allah commanded the Prophet (P.B.U.H) to proclaim Islam openly and to bring His revelation to the public. The following verses were revealed:

﴿ وَأَنذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ ٱلْأَقْرَبِينَ ﴿٢١٤﴾ وَٱخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ ٱتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢١٥﴾ فَإِنْ عَصَوْكَ فَقُلْ إِنِّى بَرِىٓءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢١٦﴾ ﴾ سورة الشعراء الآيات ٢١٤-٢١٦

(And admonish your nearest kinsmen, and lower your wing to the Believers who follow you. Then if they disobey you, say: "I am free (of responsibility) for what you do!)
(Ash-Shu'ara: 214-216)

﴿ فَٱصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾ ﴾
سورة الحِجْر آية ٩٤

(Therefore expound openly what you are commanded, and turn away from those who join false gods with Allah.)
(Al-Hijr: 94)

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) invited his kinsmen to a banquet in his home at which he tried to talk to them about Islam and to call them unto Allah. His uncle, Abū Lahab, interrupted his speech and asked the guests to stand up and leave. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) invited them again on the morrow. After they had eaten he said, "I do not know of any man in Arab history who served his people better than I have served you. I have brought you the best of this world as well as of the next. My Lord has commanded me to call you unto Him. Who of you then would stand by me on this matter"? To this appeal, his kinsmen were unsympathetic and prepared to leave." 'Ali, however, though only a boy, arose and said, "Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H): I shall be your helper. Whosoever opposes you, I shall fight as mortal enemy." The Banu Hāshim smiled at this; others laughed loudly. All present looked once at 'Ali, once at Abū Talib, his father, and left full of ridicule for what they beheld.

After addressing his kinsmen, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) now directed his call to the Makkans as a whole. One day he climbed to the top of al Safā and called, "0 People of Quraysh!" Hearing his call, the Quraysh assembled around him and asked what was the matter. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) answered, "Tell me, 0 Men of Quraysh, if I were to tell you that I see a cavalry on the other side of the mountain, would you believe me?" They answered, "Indeed, for we trust you, and we have never known you to tell a lie." Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said, "Know then that I am a warner and that I warn you of a severe punishment. O Banū 'Abd al Muttalib!

O Banū 'Abd Manāf! O Banū Zuhrah! 0 Banū Taym!

O Banū Makhzum! O Banū Asad! Allah has commanded me to warn you, my nearest kinsmen, that I can guarantee to you no good on earth or in heaven unless you witness that there is no God but Allah." Abū Lahab, fat but quick of temper as he was, arose and said, "Woe to you on this day! Did you assemble us for this?"

Severely shocked, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) looked toward his uncle for a moment. Soon the following verses were revealed:

﴿ تَبَّتْ يَدَآ أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ۝١ مَآ أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُۥ وَمَا كَسَبَ ۝٢ سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ ۝٣ ﴾ سورة المسد الآيات ١-٣

(Perish the hands of the Father of Flame! perish he! No profit to him from all his wealth, and all his gains! Burnt soon will he be in a Fire of blazing Flame!)(Al-Masad: 1-3)

Islam and Freedom

Neither the rancor of Abū Lahab nor the antagonism of other opponents in Quraysh prevented the spread of the Islamic call among the people of Makkah. Hardly a day passed without some new person joining the faith. Those inclined toward asceticism accepted Islam more readily, as neither trade nor vested interest could prejudice their consideration of the call. Such men had observed that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) depended upon Khadijah's wealth, but that he never allowed wealth to influence his religious judgment. The material considerations were always rejected wherever they ran counter to the dictates of love, compassion, friendship, and forgiveness. Indeed, Revelation itself commanded that the will to wealth is a curse upon the spirit. Did it not say,

﴿ أَلْهَىٰكُمُ ٱلتَّكَاثُرُ ۝١ حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ ٱلْمَقَابِرَ ۝٢ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۝٣ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۝٤ كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ ٱلْيَقِينِ ۝٥

لَتَرَوُنَّ ٱلۡجَحِيمَ ﴿٦﴾ ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيۡنَ ٱلۡيَقِينِ ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ لَتُسۡـَٔلُنَّ يَوۡمَئِذٍ عَنِ ٱلنَّعِيمِ ﴿٨﴾ ﴾ سورة التكاثر الآيات ١-٨

(The mutual rivalry for piling up (the good things of this world) diverts you (from the more serious things), Until you visit the graves. But nay, you soon shall know (the reality). Again, you soon shall know! Nay, were you to know with certainty of mind, (you would beware!) You shall certainly see Hell-fire! Again, you shall see it with certainty of sight! Then, shall you be questioned that Day about the joy (you indulged in!) (At-Takathur: 1-8)

What is better than that to which Muhammad (P.B.U.H) calls? He calls to freedom, to absolute and limitless freedom, to that freedom which is as dear to the Arab as his very life. Does he not liberate men from the bondage which the worship of other gods besides Allah imposes? Has he not destroyed all the obstacles that have once stood between man and Allah? Neither Hubal, al Lat, nor al 'Uzzä, neither the fire of the Zoroastrians nor the sun of the Egyptians, neither the astral bodies of the star worshippers, the apostles of Christ as princes of the church, nor any other human, angel or genii could stand between man and Allah. Before Allah and before Him alone is man responsible for his good and evil works. Man's works alone are his intercessor. On earth man's conscience alone is the final judge of his deeds, as it is its sole subject. Upon its everyday verdicts depends the last judgment of the person. What liberty is wider than this liberty to which Muhammad (P.B.U.H) called men? Did Abu Lahab and his companions call to anything like it? Do they not call men to remain enslaved under superstitions so great that the light of truth and guidance can hardly penetrate and reach through them?

The Poets of Quraysh

Abū Lahab and Abū Sufyan, noblemen of Quraysh and lords of its commerce and entertainment, began to feel the threat which the call of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) presented. They therefore decided to begin by ridiculing him and belying his prophethood. Their first act was to tempt their poet friends to attack Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in their poetry. It was then that Abū Sufyān ibn al Hārith' 'Amr ibn al 'As, and 'Abdullah ibn al Zib'ari launched their vituperative attacks in verse. A number of Muslim poets undertook to answer these attacks in kind, despite the fact that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) hardly needed their efforts. Besides the poets, others advanced and asked Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to perform some miracles with which to prove his prophethood. They challenged him to do as much as Moses or Jesus had done. They asked, "Why don't you change Mount Safā and Mount Marwah into gold? Why don't you cause the book of which you speak so much to fall down from heaven already written? Why don't you cause Gabriel to appear to all of us and speak to us as he spoke to you? Why don't you resurrect the dead and remove these mountains which bound and enclose the city of Makkah? Why don't you cause a water fountain to spring whose water is sweeter than that of Zamzam, knowing how badly your town needs the additional water supply ?" The unbelievers did not stop at these demands for miracles. In ridicule, they asked, "Why doesn't your Allah inform you of the market prices of the future in order to help you and us in the trade of the morrow ?" Whether serious or in ridicule, all these questions and demands were answered once and for all by Revelation. Allah commanded Muhammad (P.B.U.H), "Saying in the Holy Qur'an:

﴿ قُل لَّآ أَمۡلِكُ لِنَفۡسِي نَفۡعٗا وَلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَآءَ ٱللَّهُۚ وَلَوۡ كُنتُ

أَعْلَمُ ٱلْغَيْبَ لَٱسْتَكْثَرْتُ مِنَ ٱلْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِىَ ٱلسُّوٓءُ ۚ إِنْ أَنَا۠ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٨٨﴾ سورة الأعراف آية ١٨٨

(Say: "I have no power over any good or harm to myself except as Allah wills. If I had knowledge of the unseen, I should have multiplied all good, and no evil should have touched me: I am but a warner, and a bringer of glad tidings to those who have faith.") (Al-A'raf: 188)

Indeed: Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was only a warner and a messenger. How could they demand of him that which reason denies while he demanded of them only that which reason commends—nay, dictates and imposes? How could they demand of him that which no morality can tolerate, whereas he called them to goodness and genuine virtue? How could they ask him to perform miracles when the Book that was being Revealed to him, which was his guide to the truth, was the end of all miracles? How could they ask him to prove his prophethood with miracles that they might then see whether or not they would follow him, while their so-called gods were dead and cold, utterly devoid of power to do anything, whether miracle or nonmiracle? How could they ask him to prove himself with miracles when they worshipped their stone and wooden gods without ever asking them to prove their divinity? If they had only once asked their gods to prove their divinity, they. would have seen through their wood and stone and convinced themselves that they were no gods at all but dead, immobile, and unable to defend themselves against anyone.

Muhammad's Attack (P.B.U.H) against the Idols

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) did take the initiative of attacking

their gods. Hitherto he had not mentioned them at all. Now, he attacked them directly. To the Quraysh this was so serious that it aroused deep hatred. This man had become a threatening problem to them demanding definite solution. Until then they had not taken him seriously but had ridiculed him. When they assembled in Dār al Nadwah or around the Ka'bah and its idols and happened to mention him, they would speak lightly of him and ridicule his cause. Now that he had directly attacked their gods, ridiculed their worship as well as their ancestors', severely condemned Hubal, al Lät, al 'Uzzā and all other idols, the matter called for something more than ridicule. It called for a fight-p1an and serious thinking of how to combat and counter-attack. If this man were to succeed in converting the people of Makkah and in turning them against their old worship, what would happen to Makkan trade? What would remain of Makkah's religious eminence? These and like thoughts were ominous and called for the most careful strategy.

Abū Talib, Muhammad's uncle (P.B.U.H), had not joined the faith, but he continued to protect his nephew and let everyone know of his preparation to fight for him. Led by Abū Sufyān ibn Harb, some noblemen of Quraysh went to Abū Talib and addressed him in these words: "0 Abū Talib, your nephew has blasphemed our gods, attacked our religion, ridiculed our ideals and condemned our fathers for unbelief. Either you stop him or you relinquish your protection of him. Our faith which he attacks is equally your faith. Why don't you let us take care of him for you?" Abū Tālib talked to them gently and discharged them. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) continued his preaching and intensified his missionary activity. His followers multiplied. Once more Quraysh plotted against him. They went to Abū Tālib and brought with them 'Umārah ibn al Walid ibn al Mughirah, the most handsome youth in Quraysh. They asked Abū Tālib to adopt 'Umarah as his son and to let them handle Muhammad (P.B.U.H). Once more they were turned down. As Muhammad

(P.B.U.H) continued his missionary activities, they continued to plot. Finally, they went to Abu Tālib for a third time saying, "0 Abū Talib, you are an honorable elder among us. We have asked you to stop your nephew but you have not. By God, we cannot permit him to insult our fathers, to ridicule our ideals, and to castigate our gods. Either you stop him or we shall fight both you and him until one of us perishes in the process." To alienate them and to arouse their enmity was too much for Abu Talib, and yet he was neither prepared to join the faith of his nephew nor to betray him. What would he do? He called Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and told him what had happened and pleaded with him: "Save me as well as yourself, and do not cause me to carry a burden I cannot bear."

The Logic of History

For a while Muhammad (P.B.U.H) stood motionless in his place. It was a moment in which the history of being itself stopped without knowing which course to take. Whichever word this one man was about to say, would be a judgment of mankind. Should the world continue to wallow in its darkness? Should Zoroastrianism triumph over a corrupt and lifeless Christianity? Should paganism be allowed to raise its superstitious, rotten head? Or should he, Muhammad (P.B.U.H), proclaim to this world the unity of Allah, enlightening it with the light of truth, liberating the minds of men from the bondage of superstition, and raising the souls for communion with the Supernal Plenum? There was his uncle weakened by the people's opposition, unable to help or protect indeed, likely to betray him. And there were the Muslims, few and weak, unable to wage war or to resist a strong and well equipped army such as Quraysh had. There was none to lend him support in this hour of dire need. Only the truth which he proclaimed and of which he was the advocate

could console or rescue him. Nothing was left to count upon except his own faith and conviction of that truth. That alone was his whole force. Well, let it be. The other realm is better than this one. Let him then discharge his duty and convey his message. It is better to die faithful to the truth than to betray it or stammer in its cause. Refreshened and energized by the strength and determination of new resolution, he turned to his uncle and said, "0 uncle! By Allah Almighty I swear, even if they should put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left that I abjure this cause, I shall not do so until Allah has vindicated it or caused me to perish in the process."

How great is the truth! And how sublime is faith in the truth! The old man was shaken to his depths when he heard the answer of Muhammad (P.B.U.H). It was his turn to stand motionless and speechless in front of this holy power and great will which had just spoken on behalf of a life above life. Choked with emotion at his uncle's request as well as at his own certainty of the course he was to follow, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) got up to leave. For but a moment Abu Tālib hesitated between the enmity of his people and the cause of his nephew. Immediately, he called Muhammad back. "Go forth, my nephew," he said, "and say what you will. By the same God I swear I shall never betray you to your enemies."

Banū Hāshim Protects Muhammad (P.B.U.H) against Quraysh

Abu Talib communicated his resolution to Banū Hāshim and Banū al Muttalib and spoke to them about his nephew with great admiration and deep appreciation of the sublimity of Muhammad's position (P.B.U.H). He asked them all to protect Muhammad (P.B.U.H) against the Quraysh. All of them pledged to do so except Abū Lahab, who declared openly his enmity to

him and his withdrawal to the opposite camp. Undoubtedly, the tribal bond they shared with Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and their traditional enmity with Banū Umayyah influenced their decision to stand by Muhammad (P.B.U.H). Tribal solidarity and politics, however, do not completely explain their new opposition to all Quraysh in a matter so grave as to require them to repudiate the faith and beliefs inherited from the fathers. The attitude of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) toward them, his firm conviction, his calling them in kindness to the worship of Allah alone, and their awareness that among the tribes of Arabia there were certainly other religions besides their own-all these factors caused them to realize that to their nephew and fellow tribesman belonged the right to speak out his views, just as Umayyah ibn Abū al Salt and Waraqah ibn Nawfal and others had done before him. If Muhammad (P.B.U.H) were saying the truth-and they did not think that that was the case-truth will certainly prevail, and they stand to share in the glory of its victory. If, on the other hand, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was not telling the truth, then people would pass his claim by as they had other claims before. In this case it would not destroy their traditions, and there was, therefore, no reason why they should betray him to his enemies and allow them to kill him.

Persecution of the Muslims by Quraysh

From whatever harm might come from Quraysh Muhammad (P.B.U.H) took refuge behind his people. From the worries he generated within himself he took refuge in the person of Khadijah. With her faith and great love she was for him a refreshing source of joy. She supported him against every symptom of weakness or despondency generated by the harm his enemies had inflicted against him or against his followers. In fact, ever since Muhammad (P.B.U.H) made public cause of his

Revelations, Quraysh knew no peace, and the tranquility of earlier days vanished. Instigated by the Quraysh, every clan and tribe began to attack its Muslim members to dissuade 'them from their faith. One unbeliever threw his Abyssinian slave, Bilal, onto the sand under the burning sun, laid a heavy stone on his chest and left him there to die, for no reason except his insistence upon Islam. Bearing himself gallantly under this torture, Bilāl kept on repeating, "Allah is one, Allah is one." Abu Bakr saw him, bought him from his master and set him free. Indeed, Abu Bakr bought many of the slaves and clients who were being thus tortured by the unbelievers. Among these there was even a slave woman whom Abū Bakr had bought from 'Umar ibn al Khattāb before the latter's conversion. One Woman is known to have been tortured to death because of her attachment to Islam and her refusal to return to the old faith. Muslims of pure Arab blood were beaten and subjected to all sorts of maltreatment and contemptuous humiliation. Even Muhammad (P.B.U.H) did not escape, despite the protection of Banū Hāshim and Banū al Muttalib. Umm Jamil, Aba Lahab's wife, used to throw the refuse from her house onto Muhammad's door. All Muhammad could do was simply to remove it. While Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was praying near the Ka'bah, Abu Lahab threw on him the entrails of a goat sacrificed to one of the gods; and Muhammad (P.B.U.H) could only go to his daughter Fātimah for her to clean him and wash the dirt off his clothes. This abuse was all in addition to the terrible vituperation and vile calumnies the unbelievers directed against the Muslims on every occasion and in every quarter. Such persecution continued for a long time, but it only confirmed the Muslims in their faith and challenged them to sacrifice everything for the sake of their convictions.

Muslim Patience

This period of Muhammad's life (P.B.U.H) is one of the

noblest and greatest pages of human history. Neither he nor his followers sought wealth or reputation, power or sovereignty. Rather, they were seekers after the truth and believers therein. To those who did harm him, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) prayed for guidance, for liberation from the yoke of vile paganism and from its immorality and villainy. It was for this noble spiritual objective that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) suffered persecution. The poets insulted him; the tribe plotted against him, threw stones at his house, threatened his folks and followers, and came close to killing him near the Ka'bah. The more they persecuted, the more patience and resolve Muhammad (P.B.U.H) showed in his mission. The believers repeated and were encouraged by Muhammad's pledge (P.B.U.H) that he would not abjure this cause even if given both sun and moon. Great sacrifices became small, and death itself became a welcome alternative. One must appreciate the strength of these men's faith and the depth of their commitment at a time when the new religion was not even complete and the Qur'ān was not yet fully Revealed. No doubt Muhammad's gentleness (P.B.U.H), good character, truthfulness, resoluteness, strength of will, and conviction were contributing factors. But there were other factors besides.

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) lived in a free country very much like a republic. As far as social eminence and nobility of lineage, he ranked among the highest and best. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) did not have much wealth, but he had all he needed, and so did Banū Hashim. To them belonged the ***sidanah*** of the Ka'bah and the ***siqayah*** and all that they wished by way of religious titles. Therefore, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) stood in no need of money, prestige, political power, or religious eminence. In this respect, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was quite different from the prophets that preceded him. Moses, for instance, was born in Egypt when Pharaoh was worshipped by its people as God. It was he who called to them,

﴿ فَقَالَ أَنَا۠ رَبُّكُمُ ٱلْأَعْلَىٰ ﴿٢٤﴾ ﴾ سورة النازعات آية ٢٤

(Saying, "I am your Lord, most high.) (An-Nazi'at: 24)

The priesthood assisted Pharaoh in tyrannizing over the people and in exploiting them. The revolution that Moses led by command of his Lord was a revolution against the political as well as the religious order. Did Moses not seek to reduce Pharaoh to the equal of the most ordinary peasant in front of God, even though that peasant was of the meanest class who drew their water from the Nile with the *shadoof?* Pharaoh's divinity, Moses thought, as well as the social order on which it stood, must all be destroyed. The revolution must first be political. Consequently, from the very beginning the Mosaic call was met by Pharaoh with all-out war, and miracles were necessary that the Mosaic call might be believed by the rank and file. When, for instance, Moses threw his stick on the ground, it became a living serpent devouring what Pharaoh's magicians had created. These miracles, however, turned out to be futile, for Moses had to flee from his country of birth. His flight was assisted by another miracle, that of the splitting of the waters of the sea. As for Jesus, he was born in Nazareth, in Palestine, a province under the yoke of Roman colonialism. He called men to patience in their suffering of injustice, to forgiveness after repentence and to forms of love and mercy which the rulers regarded as tantamount to rebellion against their tyranny. The miracles of resurrecting the dead, healing the sick, and all that Jesus did with the support of the Holy Spirit were necessary for the success of his cause. In their essence, the doctrines of Jesus and Muhammad (P.B.U.H) were built on the same premises and led to the same conclusions, with differences in detail not relevant for our present discussion. The point is that these various factors, especially the political among them gave to the call of Jesus the orientation it took. As for Muhammad

(P.B.U.H), since his circumstances were what we have just seen, his message was spiritual and rational. At every stage of its development, it rested on a foundation of truth, goodness, and beauty for their own sakes. Because of its distance from any political struggle, Muhammad's message (P.B.U.H) did not disturb the republican regime of Makkah in the least, nor was it disturbed thereby.

The Call of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and Modern Scientific Inquiry

The reader may be surprised by our emphasis on the similarity of Muhammad's teaching (P.B.U.H) to the methods of modern science. The scientific method demands that were one to undertake an investigation, he should suspend his personal views, beliefs and doctrines. It demands that he begin his study by observation, classification, comparison, experimentation, and then draw his conclusions from these scientific observations as premises. A conclusion reached through this method is scientific and, by the same token, it remains susceptible to further scrutiny and investigation. It remains valid as long as further scientific study has not disproved any one of the premises on which it is based. This scientific method is the highest human achievement in the cause of free thought. And yet this very method is none other than that of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), the very foundation of his cause. How did his followers become convinced of it? They repudiated all their previous beliefs and began to concentrate their thoughts on what lay before them. But what was before them? What were the facts of religious life in Arabia? Every one of the Arab tribes had its own idols; but which one was true and which false? Besides, within Arabia as well as in the surrounding

countries, there were Christians, Jews, Sabeans, Zoroastrian fire-worshippers, and others who worshipped the sun. Whose faith was true and whose false?

The Essence of Muhammad's Call (P.B.U.H)

Suppose we lay all this aside and completely avoid its influence upon our minds and hearts. Suppose we cut ourselves loose from every view and every doctrine we have previously entertained. And suppose we observe and consider. The first truth to stand out is that every being is somehow connected with all other beings. In the case of man, the clans, the tribes, and nations are obviously interconnected. Man is also connected with the animals and the world of things. This earth of ours is connected with the sun, the moon, and all the heavenly bodies.

Necessary and immutable laws regulate and govern all these interconnections. Neither may the sun overtake the moon nor the night overtake the day. If any one being in the universe were to alter or change these laws, the cosmos itself would change and would no more be what it is. If the sun, for instance, failed to provide the earth with light and heat and thus violate the laws by which nature has been running for millions of years, the earth and the sky would not be what they are. As long as this does not happen it is not possible for the totality of the cosmos to hold itself together except by a moving spirit, a spirit from which it has arisen and has developed and to which it must return. This spirit alone is that to which man should be subject. Everything else in this universe is subject to that spirit just as man is. Man, the cosmos, space, and time are therefore a unity; and this spirit is the origin and substance of this unity. To this spirit alone therefore belongs worship. To this spirit alone all minds and hearts should be oriented. Everywhere in this universe we should be able by reason and meditation to discover this spirit's eternal

laws. Hence, whatever men worship besides God—be it idols, kings, Pharaohs, fire, or sun—is a falsehood and an illusion unworthy of man, of human reason, of the human capacity to discover the laws of Allah through examination of the creation with which Allah has endowed man.

That is the essence of the message of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as the early Muslims knew it. It was conveyed to them by Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as a Revelation cast into such sublime form that it is still regarded as a miracle. This Revelation has combined the truth of content with the perfection of form. Upon contact with it, the souls of the Muslims became ennobled, and their hearts were moved to seek communion with the noble spirit of Muhammad (P.B.U.H). Muhammad (P.B.U.H) led them to the realization that good works constitute the road of felicity and that men shall be rewarded for their works on the day they complete in piety their duties in this world, ***i.e.*** when every soul shall receive its due.

﴿ فَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُۥ وَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُۥ ﴾ سورة الزلزلة الآيتان ٧-٨

(Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it! And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it.) (Al-Zalzalah: 7-8)

What great and ennobling respect for human reason! What sweeping destruction of all the impediments that stand in the way of human reason! Sufficient is it to man to understand this for him to appreciate it, to believe in it, and to realize what it demands of him to rise to the highest level of humanity. As long as one takes his stand on the side of reason, every sacrifice demanded by such heights seems easy.

The Conversion of Hamzah

The majestic stand of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and of his followers convinced Banū Hashim and Banu al Muttalib to strengthen their protection of him. Once, on encountering Muhammad (P.B.U.H) on the road, Abū Jahl insulted him and abūsed his new religion. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) did not answer him and walked away. Hamzah, Muhammad's uncle (P.B.U.H) and brother-in-nursing, still followed the religion of Quraysh and was very strong and fear-inspiring. He was an addicted hunter who would circumambulate the Ka'bah every time he returned from a hunting trip and before he entered his home. As he entered the city on the day that Abū Jahl insulted Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and learned of what had happened to his nephew, he became furious, and went straight to the Ka'bah. Upon entering the Mosque, he did not greet anyone as he used to do. Rather, he went straight to Abu Jahl and hit him very hard with his bow. Some members of Banū Makhzam rose to the help of Abū Jahl, but Abū Jahl pushed them aside. He acknowledged that he had insulted Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and then decided that the dispute had better be cut short rather than allowed to spread. Hamzah then declared his conversion to Islam, took the oath of allegiance to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and promised to sacrifice everything for the sake of Allah.

Delegation of 'Utbah ibn Rabi'ah

Undaunted by any harm or injury that befell them, their faith unshaken, the Muslims kept on increasing in numbers and strength. They proclaimed their faith loudly and performed their prayers publicly—all to the alarm of Quraysh, who were at a loss what to do next. For a moment they thought that they could get rid of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) by satisfying what they took to be

his personal ambitions. Obviously they forgot the greatness of the Islamic call, the purity of its spiritual essence, and its noble transcendence of any political partisanship. ‘Utbah ibn Rabi’ah, one of the distinguished leaders of Arabia, convinced the Quraysh at one of their community meetings to delegate him to approach Muhammad (P.B.U.H) with a number of alternative offerings of which, he thought, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) would surely accept one. He therefore went to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and said, “0 Nephew, you certainly enjoy among us great eminence and noble lineage, and you have brought about a great issue and divided your people. Listen to me for I am about to make several offers to you, certain as I am that one of them will prove satisfactory to you. If by bringing about the conflict you did, you have sought to achieve some wealth, know that we are prepared to give you of our wealth until you become the richest man among us. If, on the other hand, you desired honor and power, we would make you our chief and endow you with such power that nothing could be done without your consent. Even if you wanted to be a king, we should not hesitate to crown you king over us. Finally, if you are unable to cure yourself of the visions that you have been seeing, we shall be happy to seek for you at our expense all the medical service possible until your health is perfectly restored.” When he finished, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) recited to him, the ***surah*** “al Sajdah.”[1] ‘Utbah listened attentively to the Divine recitation. Facing him was a man devoid of all ambition for wealth, prestige, honor, power, or sovereignty. Neither was he sick. Facing him was indeed a man telling the truth, calling to the good, answering him with arguments yet more soundly and sublimely expressed than any he had ever heard. When Muhammad (P.B.U.H) finished, ‘Utbah returned to Quraysh spellbound by the beauty and sublimity of what he had seen and heard and by the greatness of this man and his eloquence. The Quraysh were obviously not happy with this turn, nor did they agree with ‘Utbah’s opinion that they should

leave Muhammad (P.B.U.H) for all the Arabs together to deal with; they would thereby reap a harvest of pride in the event that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) wins, or enjoy an effortless victory in the event he loses. In fact, Quraysh resumed their attacks upon Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his followers, intensified their aggression, and inflicted upon his companions all sorts of injuries from which Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was saved only through the protection of Abu Talib, Banu Hāshim, and Banū al Muttalib.

Emigration to Abyssinia

Makkan persecution of the Muslims increased in intensity. Many Muslims now became so subject to torture and murder that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) instructed them to disperse throughout the world. When they asked where they should go, he advised them to escape to Abyssinia, the Christian kingdom—where "a king rules without injustice, a land of truthfulness—until Allah leads us to a way out of our difficulty." Fearful of Makkan persecution and desirous of worshipping Allah in peace and freedom, a number of Muslims emigrated to Abyssinia at Muhammad's advice (P.B.U.H). The first group to emigrate included eleven men and four women. After secretly leaving Makkah, they arrived in Abyssinia where they lived under the protection of the Negus until they heard that the Muslims in Makkah had become secure against Quraysh's attacks, as we shall see a little later. When upon return they found the Quraysh's persecution stronger than it ever was before, they emigrated once more to Abyssinia, this time about eighty men strong, not counting women and children. This larger group of Muslims lived in Abyssinia until after the Prophet's emigration (P.B.U.H) to Yathrib. Their emigration to Abyssinia is usually referred to as "the first emigration in Islam."

Quraysh's Delegation to the Negus

It is perfectly appropriate for the biographer of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to ask whether the purpose of this emigration undertaken by the Muslims at the advice and command of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was merely to escape from the pagans of Makkah and their persecution and harm. Or was it dictated by an Islamic political strategy by which Muhammad (P.B.U.H) sought to realize a higher objective? These questions are indeed proper when we consider that the whole history of the Arab Prophet (P.B.U.H) confirms ever more clearly that he was a profound and far-sighted statesman in addition to being the carrier of the divine message and a man of unrivaled discipline and magnanimity. What makes this matter especially questionable is the report that the Makkans were so upset at this exodus of the Muslims to Abyssinia that they immediately sent a delegation to the Negus carrying precious gifts in order to bring about the emigrants' extradition and return to Makkah. Abyssinia, as well as its Negus, were all Christians and, therefore, there was no fear that they might follow the religion of Muhammad (P.B.U.H). Did the Makkans then fear that the Negus' protection of the Muslims might provide support for the cause of Muhammad's religion (P.B.U.H) within Arabia? Or did they think that the Muslim emigrants would one day return greater in numbers, wealth, and power in order to wage a retaliatory war against them?

The two ambassadors, 'Amr ibn al 'As and 'Abdullah ibn Abū Rabi'ah, presented to the Negus and his patriarch their precious gifts and asked for permission to have the Muslim emigrants extradited and sent back to Makkah. They said to the Negus, "0 King! A number of ignoble plebeians from Makkah have taken refuge in your county. They have apostasized from the religion of their people and have not joined your religion.

They follow a new religion, known neither to us nor to you, which they created. The leading noblemen of Makkah, who are their parents, uncles, and relatives, have sent us to you to ask for their return. Their elders at home are better judges of the differences between them" The two ambassadors had already obtained the approval of the patriarch for extradition without prior reference of the matter to the Negus. Apparently, the Makkan gifts to the patriarch were instrumental in obtaining this summary decision. The Negus, however, refused to concur in the judgment of his patriarch until he had had a chance to hear the refugees plead their own case. He sent after them and asked, "What is this new religion which caused you to separate yourselves from your people, a religion which is different from mine as well as from any other of the known religions?"

The Muslims' Answer to the Ambassadors' Claims

Ja'far ibn Abū Tālib rose and said in answer, "0 King! We were in a state of ignorance and immorality, worshipping idols, eating carrion, committing all sorts of iniquity. We honored no relative and assisted no neighbor. The strong among us exploited the weak. Then Allah sent us a prophet (P.B.U.H), one of our own people whose lineage, truthfulness, loyalty, and purity were well known to us. He called us to worship Allah alone and to repudiate all the stones and idols which we and our ancestors used to worship. He commanded us always to tell the truth, to remain true to trust and promise, to assist the relative, to be good neighbors, to abstain from blood and things forbidden, and to avoid fornication, perjury, and false witness. He commanded us not to rob the wealth of the orphan or falsely to accuse the married woman. He ordered us to worship Allah alone and never to associate any other being with Him, to hold prayers, to fast, and to pay the ***zakāt*** (the five pillars of Islam were here enu

merated and explained). We believed in him and what he brought to us from Allah and followed him (P.B.U.H) in what he enjoined and forbade. Our people, however, tried to sway us away from our religion and persecuted us and inflicted upon us great suffering that we might re-enter into the immoral practices of old. As they vanquished and berated us unjustly and made life intolerable for us in Makkah, we chose you and your country and came thither to live under your protection in justice and peace." Thereupon the Negus asked, "Will you show me some of the Revelation which your Prophet (P.B.U.H) claims to have come to him from Allah?" Ja'far answered, "Yes !"and recited to the Negus the ***surah*** of Mary from its beginning until the following verses:

﴿ فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَن كَانَ فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ آتَانِيَ الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُ وَأَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا ﴿٣١﴾ وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَتِي وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدتُّ وَيَوْمَ أَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ أُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ﴿٣٣﴾ ﴾ سورة مريم الآيات ٢٩-٣٣

(But she pointed to the baby. They said: "How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle? He said: "I am indeed a servant of Allah: He has given me Revelation and made me a prophet; "And He has made me blessed wheresoever I be, and has enjoined on me Prayer and Zakah as long as I live: "(He) has made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing or unlest "So Peace is on me

the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)!) (Maryam: 29-33)

Answers of the Negus and the Patriarchs

When the patriarchs heard this statement confirming as it did the message of the Evangel, they were pleasantly surprised and said: "These words must have sprung from the same fountainhead from which the words of our master Jesus Christ have sprung." The Negus then said, "What you have just recited and that which was Revealed to Moses must have both issued from the same source. Go forth into my kingdom; I shall not extradite you at all." On the following day, 'Amr ibn al 'As returned to the Negus and pleaded, "There is another side to the Muslims' new religion in which they judge Jesus, Son of Mary, in totally different but condemnable terms." The Negus sent after the Muslims, brought them back into his presence and asked them to tell him more about Jesus. The same Ja'far ibn Abū Tālib answered for them, "Our judgment of Jesus is exactly the same as that which was Revealed to our Prophet (P.B.U.H); namely, that Jesus is the servant of Allah, His Prophet, His spirit, His command given unto Mary, the innocent virgin." The Negus drew a line on the floor with his cane and said with great joy, "Between your religion and ours there is really no more difference than this line." Thus the Negus was convinced, after hearing the two parties, that the Muslims not only acknowledged Jesus and Christianity as true religion but worshipped the same God as well. The Muslims found under his protection the peace and tranquility they sought, and lived in his country until they found cause to return while Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was still in Makkah. Apparently they had been misinformed that Quraysh's antagonism to the Muslims had subsided. When they discovered that the Makkans were still persecuting Muhammad (P.B.U.H)

and his followers, they returned to Abyssinia, this time eighty strong besides women and children. The question remains, however, whether these two emigrations were merely for escape from injury or were, at least in the foresight of Muhammad (P.B.U. H) alone, devised for a political motive which the historian ought to investigate and clarify.

The Muslims and Abyssinian Christianity

The historian may certainly ask why Muhammad (P.B.U.H) trusted that his companions and followers would go to a country whose religion was Christianity, a scriptural religion, and whose prophet was Jesus, whom Islam acknowledged as prophet and in whose message it concurred, without fearing that they might be exposed to abjuring their faith even though in favor of one different from that of Quraysh. How did he trust that his followers would remain faithful and loyal when Abyssinia was a far more fertile and affluent country than that of Quraysh? One of the Muslims that emigrated to Abyssinia did, in fact convert to Christianity, thus establishing that the danger was real. It was natural for Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to have felt such fears, especially since Muhammad (P.B.U.H), himself, was still weak and his old followers were still in great doubt as to his ability to protect them or to come to their rescue. Assuming, therefore, Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) great intelligence and foresight, his charity, kindness and compassion, it is most likely that such fears must have stirred within his soul. But he felt absolutely secure in this regard. Islam was on that day, as it was to remain throughout the Prophet's life, (P.B.U.H) absolutely pure and unspoiled by internal doubts, divisions, and deviations. On the other hand, Abyssinian Christianity, like the Christianity of Najrān, al Hirah, and al Sham, was mixed up with devious doctrines brought into the faith by the apotheosizers of Mary, the

apotheosizers of Jesus, and the opponents of both. The Muslims, drawing directly from the pure fountainhead of prophetic revelation, could not possibly stand in any danger of being swayed by any such confusion.

The Spirit in Islām

In actual fact, most religions did not survive for a number of generations without becoming polluted by some kind of idolatry. Even if it were not of the same ignoble kind prevalent in early days in the Arabian Peninsula, it was still some form of idolatry. Islam is diametrically opposed to idolatry in any form or kind. From the earliest days of church history Christianity has accorded to the priesthood a special status in the religion itself; Islam has never given such position to anyone. On the contrary, Islam both condemned the priesthood and transcended it. Then as now, Islam has remained precisely the religion which enables the human soul to rise to the greatest heights. It has not tolerated any link between man and Allah except a person's own piety and good works and his wishing for his fellow men that which he wishes for himself. Nothing—neither idols nor priesthood, diviners nor officiators—could prevent the human soul from rising to a consciousness of unity with ultimate reality and to a unity of good will and good works, and, thereby, from winning its great reward with Allah. The human soul! That spirit which is from Allah! That spirit which is connected to eternal time! That spirit, which as long as it does the good, is not separated from Allah by anything whatever and is subject to no being whatever other than Allah. The rich, the mighty, and the evil can all lay hold upon the body. They can torture it and prevent it from realizing its passions and pleasures. They can even destroy it and rob it of its life. But they can never reach the soul as long as that person wants the soul to rise above matter, above power, and

above time to link itself with ultimate, total reality! Only on the Day of Judgment will the human soul receive the punishment or reward that is its due. On that Day no father may take the place of his son, and no son may replace his father. On that Day neither the wealth of the rich, the strength of the mighty, nor the argument of the eloquent will avail them. Good works will be the only witness and the only defense for or against their author. On that Day, all being—its eternal past as well as its eternal future—will stand as one integral unit. On that Day none will be done an injustice, and none will receive aught except his due.

How could Muhammad (P.B.U.H) fear that his companions would abjure the spiritual meaning and values which he had so well inculcated upon their hearts? Why should he fear that they might be diverted from this conviction and faith when his example was ever present to them in his own person, so beloved of them that they cherished him more than themselves, their families and people? How could there be any chance of their deviation from the faith when Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) resolution not to abjure the cause even if they should place the sun in his right hand and the moon in his left hand is a living reality, ever present to their minds? How could they abjure their faith when the spirit of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) filled their being with the light of conviction, wisdom, justice, goodness, truth, and beauty; when their character and ethos had been molded by Muhammad's humility (P.B.U.H), charity, loving kindness, and compassion? Muhammad (P.B.U.H) felt at ease toward the emigration of his companions to Abyssinia. The religious freedom and security the emigrants enjoyed under the Negus had caused the Quraysh no little embarrassment. That the Muslims were free among total strangers but persecuted by their own relatives, despite the closest bonds of family and tribe, must have been an annoying spectacle for Quraysh. It must have hurt their tribal pride to see their fellow tribesmen enjoy security and peace after having been subjected to all kinds of injustice and injury.

After the victims had suffered much despair and helplessness, they began to see in suffering and patience, although this view runs counter to the logic of Islam, a very rapprochement to Allah, an attunement of themselves to His mercy.

The Conversion of 'Umar ibn al Khattāb

At that time, 'Umar ibn al Khattab was a mature man of thirty to thirty-five years of age. Physically he was well built and strong of muscle. Temperamentally he was capable of strong passion. He loved wine and amusement, and despite his very harshness of character, he was gentle and compassionate toward his people. As for the Muslims, he was one of their strongest opponents, a merciless aggressor upon their peace, security and religion. Their emigration to Abyssinia and the Negus's protection of them caused him no little resentment. His pride as a national of Makkah was wounded by the fact that a foreign king and country were protecting Makkans who can find neither security nor peace in their own homes. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was meeting one day with his own companions in a house in al Safā quarter of Makkah. Among those present were his uncle Hamzah, his cousin, 'Ali ibn Abū Tālib, Abu Bakr ibn Abū Quhafah, and other Muslims. 'Umar learned of their meeting and went there resolved to kill Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and thus relieve the Quraysh of its burden, restore its ravaged unity, and re-establish respect for the gods that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had castigated. On the road to Makkah he was met by Nu'aym ibn 'Abdullah. Upon learning what 'Umar was about, Nu'aym said, "By God, you have deceived yourself, 0 'Umar! Do you think that Banu 'Abd Manaf would let you run around alive once you had killed their son Muhammad (P.B.U.H)? Why don't you return to your own house and at least set it straight?" When 'Umar learned that Fātimah, his sister, and her husband, Sa'id

ibn Zayd, had already been converted to Islam, he turned around and went straight to their house. Upon entering the house without knocking, he found them listening to a third person reciting the Qur'ān. They, too, having heard him approach, had hid their visitor and put away the manuscript of the Qur'ān from which they were reading. 'Umar asked, "What is this cantillation that I have heard as I walked in?" The pair denied hearing anything.

Flying into a rage, 'Umar told them that he knew that they had foresworn their faith and entered into that of Muhammad (P.B.U.H). He chastised them and delivered a strong blow to his brotherin-law, Sa'id. Fatimah rose to protect her husband. As she came between the two men, 'Umar hit her on the head and caused her to bleed. At this, the pair lost their fear entirely and said together, "Yes, indeed! We have become Muslims. Do what you will!" At this surge of courage, as well as upon seeing the blood of his sister flow, 'Umar was moved. After calming down a little, he asked his sister to let him see the manuscript which she and her husband had been reading together. After she surrendered the manuscript to him, he read it and his face changed to an expression of regret for what he had just done. As for what he had just read, he was deeply shaken by its beauty, its majesty, the nobility of its call, and the magnanimity of its message. In short, 'Umar's good side got the better of him. He left the house of his sister, his heart mellow and his soul reassured by the new certainty which he had just discovered. He went straight to al Safā, where Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was meeting with his companions, sought permission to enter, and declared his conversion to Islam in front of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) The Muslims acclaimed his conversion and found therein, as they did in the conversion of Hamzah, new security for the community as a whole.

The conversion of 'Umar divided the Qumysh further. It reduced their power and caused them to reconsider their strategy. In fact, it increased Muslim power so greatly and so significantly

that both they and the Quraysh had to change their positions ***vis-a-vis*** each other. Moreover, it triggered a whole line of events in inspiring new levels of sacrifices and stirring new forces which, together, led to the emigration of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and to the inception of the political side of his career.

6

The Story of the Gharanique

The Emigrants Return from Abyssinia

The emigrants resided in Abyssinia three months during which 'Umar ibn al Khattab converted to Islam. In their exile, they heard that upon 'Umar's conversion the Quraysh had stopped their persecution of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his followers. According to one report a number of them had returned to Makkah, according to another, all. On reaching Makkah they realized that the Quraysh had resumed persecution of the Muslims with stronger hatred and renewed vigor. Unable to resist, a number of them returned to Abyssinia while others entered Makkah under the cover of night and hid themselves away. It is also reported that those who returned took with them a number of new converts to Abyssinia where they were to stay until after the emigration to Madinah and the establishment of Muslim political power.

We may ask what incited the Muslims of Abyssinia to return to Makkah three months after their emigration. It is at this stage that the story of the goddesses is told by ibn Sa'd in his *At Tabaqat at K'ubrā,* by al Tabari in his *Tārikh at Rusul wa at Mulūk,* as well as by a number of Muslim exegetes and biographers. This story arrested the attention of the western

Orientalists who took it as true and repeated it *ad nauseam.* This story tells that realizing how alienated the Quraysh had become and how intensely they had persecuted his companions, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) expressed the wish that a Revelation might come that would reconcile his people rather than further alienate them. When, one day, he was sitting with the Quraysh in one of their club houses around the Ka'bah, he recited to them *surah* "al Najm." After reading the verses,

﴿ أَفَرَءَيْتُمُ ٱللَّٰتَ وَٱلْعُزَّىٰ ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَنَوٰةَ ٱلثَّالِثَةَ ٱلْأُخْرَىٰ ﴿٢٠﴾ ﴾

سورة النجم الآيتان ١٩-٢٠

(Have you seen Lat, and 'Uzza, And another, the Third (goddess), Manat? (An- Najm;19-20)

He continued the recitation with the statement, "They are the goddesses on high. Their intercession is worthy of being sought." He then proceeded with his reading of the *surah* as we know it. When he finished he prostrated himself, and all the Quraysh likewise followed him. At this moment, the Quraysh proclaimed its satisfaction with what the Prophet (P.B.U.H) had read and said, "We have always known that Allah creates and gives life, gives food, and resuscitates. But our gods intercede for us with Him. Now that you have allowed for them a place in your new religion, we are all with you." Thus the difference between Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and the Quraysh was dissolved. When the news of this reconciliation reached Abyssinia, the Muslims there decided to return to their beloved country and people. As they reached the approaches of Makkah, they met some Kinānah tribesmen who informed them that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) allowed the gods a good position in his religion, reconciled the Quraysh, and was now followed by everyone. The story then relates how Muhammad (P.B.U.H) reverted by

blaspheming those gods and the Quraysh reverted to persecution. It further adds that the returnees stopped to consider what their next course should be. They longed so much to see their relatives and next of kin that they went ahead and entered Makkah.

Other versions of the same story give detailed descriptions of Muhammad's attitude toward the gods of Quraysh. They claimed that Quraysh's plea that if he but grant their gods a share in his religion the Makkans would all support him, troubled the Prophet (P.B.U.H). They relate how Muhammad (P.B.U.H) one evening reviewed *sūrah* "al Najm" with Gabriel when the latter made a timely appearance. When he arrived at the sentence in question, Gabriel asked where it came from. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) answered, "I must have attributed to Allah that which He did not say." Allah then revealed the following verses:

﴿ وَإِن كَادُوا۟ لَيَفْتِنُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِىَ عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَهُۥ ۖ وَإِذًا لَّٱتَّخَذُوكَ خَلِيلًا ﴿٧٣﴾ وَلَوْلَآ أَن ثَبَّتْنَـٰكَ لَقَدْ كِدتَّ تَرْكَنُ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْـًٔا قَلِيلًا ﴿٧٤﴾ إِذًا لَّأَذَقْنَـٰكَ ضِعْفَ ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ وَضِعْفَ ٱلْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٧٥﴾ ﴾

سورة الإسراء الآيات ٧٣-٧٥

And their purpose was to tempt you away from that which We had revealed unto you, to substitute in Our name something quite different: (in that case) behold, they would certainly have made you (their) friend! And had We not given you strength you would nearly have inclined to them a little. In that case We should have made you taste double portion (of punishment) in this life, and equal portion in death: and moreover you would have found none to help you against Us! (AL-Isra: 73-75)

Thereafter, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) returned to his condemnation of the gods, and Quraysh returned to their persecution.

Incoherence of the Story

Such is the story of the goddesses reported by more than one biographer, pointed to by more than one exegete of the Qur'ān, and singled out and repeated by a number of western Orientalists. It is a story whose incoherence is evident upon the least scrutiny. It contradicts the infallibility of every prophet in conveying the message of his Lord. All the more wonder, therefore, that some Muslim scholars have accepted it as true. Ibn Ishaq, for his part, did not hesitate at all to declare it a fabrication by the *zindiqs*. Those who were taken in by it rationalized it further with the verse,

﴿ وَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَا مِن قَبۡلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٖ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّآ إِذَا تَمَنَّىٰٓ أَلۡقَى ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنُ فِيٓ أُمۡنِيَّتِهِۦ فَيَنسَخُ ٱللَّهُ مَا يُلۡقِي ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنُ ثُمَّ يُحۡكِمُ ٱللَّهُ ءَايَٰتِهِۦۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٞ ۝٥٢ لِّيَجۡعَلَ مَا يُلۡقِي ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنُ فِتۡنَةٗ لِّلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٞ وَٱلۡقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمۡۗ وَإِنَّ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ لَفِي شِقَاقِۭ بَعِيدٖ ۝٥٣ ﴾ سورة الحج الآيتان ٥٢-٥٣

Never did We send a Messenger or a prophet before you, but, when he framed a desire, Satan threw some (vanity) into his desire: but Allah will cancel anything (vain) that Satan throws in, and Allah will confirm (and establish)

His Signs: for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom: That He may make the suggestions thrown in by Satan, but a trial for those in whose hearts is a disease and who are hardened of heart: verily the wrong-doers are in a schism far (from the Truth) (Al-Hajj:52-53)

Some explain the word ***"tamannā"*** in the foregoing verse as meaning "to read; "others give it the usual meaning of "to press wishfully." Muslim and Western scholars who accept the story explain that the Prophet (P.B.U.H) suffered heavily from the persecution the unbelievers directed at his companions. They tell how the unbelievers killed some Muslims, exposed others to burning by the sun while pinned down to the ground with heavy stones (as was the case with Bilāl), and how these sufferings pressured Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to permit his companions to migrate to Abyssinia. They underscore Quraysh's alienation and the psychological effect of their boycott upon the Prophet (P.B.U.H). Since Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was very anxious to convert them to Islam and to save them from idol worship, they claim that his thinking of reconciling them by adding a few verses to ***surah*** "al Najm" is not farfetched. Finally, they allege that Muhammad's jubilation (P.B.U.H) was all too natural when, coming to the end of his recitation and prostrating himself, the Quraysh joined in, showing their preparation to follow him now that he had given a share to their gods with Allah.

To these tales of some books of biography and exegesis, Sir William Muir adds what he thinks is a final and conclusive proof. He says that the emigrants to Abyssinia had hardly spent three months there during which the Negus had tolerated as well as protected them when they decided to return to Makkah. Had they not heard news of a reconciliation between Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and Quraysh nothing would have caused them to return so soon. But, reasons Muir, how could there be reconciliation between Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and Quraysh

without a determined effort to that effect on the part of Muhammad (P.B. U.H)? In Makkah, the Muslims had then been far fewer and weaker than the Quraysh. They were still incapable of protecting themselves against the injuries which the Quraysh had been inflicting upon them. Why, then, should the Quraysh have taken the initiative in such reconciliation?

Refutation of These Arguments

These are the arguments on which stands the claim for veracity of the story of the goddesses. They are all false, incapable of standing any scrutiny or analysis. Let us begin with the argument of the Orientalist Muir. The Muslims who returned from Abyssinia did so for two reasons. First, 'Umar ibn al Khattab was converted to Islam shortly after their emigration. With him, he brought to the Muslim camp the same boldness, determination, and the tribal standing with which he had been fighting the Muslims before. He never concealed his conversion nor did he ever shun the Quraysh opponents. On the contrary, he proclaimed his conversion publicly and challenged the Quraysh openly. He did not approve the Muslim's concealment of themselves, their secret movement from one end of Makkah to the other, and their holding of prayers at a safe distance from any Quraysh attack. 'Umar began to fight the Quraysh as soon as he entered the faith of Islam, constantly pressed his way close to the Ka'bah, and performed his prayer there in company with whatever Muslims that decided to join him. It was at this new challenging turn of events that the Quraysh came to the realization that any further injury inflicted upon Muhammad (P.B.U.H) or his companions would henceforth create a civil war of which nobody knew the consequences. By this time, a great number of men from the various clans of Quraysh had joined Islam. To kill any one of these would necessarily imply the rise

to war not only of his fellow Muslims but of all the clans of which the various Muslims or allies were members, even though the rest of the clan or the tribe were still of a different religion. After the conversion of 'Umar and the entry of so many members of other clans into the faith, it became impossible to fight Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in the same way as before. Such a course could easily expose the whole of Quraysh to terrible peril. It was necessary to find a new way which did not incur such risks, and until such way was found, the Quraysh thought it advantageous to enter into an armistice with Muhammad and the Muslims. It was this news which reached the emigrants in Makkah and prompted them to return home.

Two Revolutions in Abyssinia

The emigrants would have hesitated to return to Makkah were it not for another reason. A revolution broke out against the Negus in which his personal faith as well as his protection of the Muslims were under attack. For their part, the Muslims had prayed and wished that Allah would give the Negus victory over his enemies. But they could not participate in such a conflict since they were foreigners who arrived there too recently. When, at the same time, they heard of the news of an armistice between Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and Quraysh favorable to the Muslims and protecting them from injury, they decided to escape from the Abyssinian revolution and return home. That is exactly what all or some of them did. They hardly reached Makkah, however, when Quraysh decided upon a course of action against the Muslims and entered into a pact with their allies to boycott Banū Hashim completely in order to prevent any intermarriage with them and to stop any purchase by or sale to them. As soon as this new alliance was concluded, open war broke out again. The returning Muslims sought immediately to re—emigrate and take

with them all those who could manage to go. These were to meet greater difficulties as the Quraysh sought to impede their move. What caused the Muslims to return from Abyssinia, therefore, was not, as Orientalist Muir claims, the reconciliation of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) with Quraysh. Rather, it was the armistice to which the Quraysh was compelled to resort following the conversion of 'Umar and his hold support of the religion of Allah with his tribal relations. The so-called reconciliation, therefore, constitutes no evidence for the story of the goddesses.

Inverted Evidence of the Qur'ānic Text

As for the argument of some biographers and exegetes that the verses, "They had almost succeeded in inducing you and "Every prophet We sent before you was such that, whenever he pressed for revelation constitute evidence for the story of the goddesses, it is yet more incoherent than that of Sir Muir. It is sufficient to remember that the first group of verses include the statement, "Had We not confirmed you in your faith, you might have been tempted." This group shows that even if Satan had actually hastened to inspire Muhammad (P.B.U.H) with something satisfying his wish and thus induced him to favor the unbelievers, Allah had confirmed the Prophet (P.B.U.H) in his faith and prevented him from falling to the temptation. Had Muhammad (P.B.U.H) really fallen, Allah would have inflicted upon him inescapable punishment. The point is, precisely, that he did not fall. Hence, these verses prove the opposite of what these advocates assume them to prove. The story of the goddesses asserts that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) did indeed incline toward the Quraysh, that the Quraysh had indeed induced him to add to the Divine word, and that he indeed did attribute to Allah that which Allah had not said. The text, on the other hand, tells

us the exact opposite, namely that Allah confirmed him in his faith and that he did not add to the Divine word. Moreover, we should well bear in mind the fact that the books of exegesis and the books dealing with the causes and circumstances of Revelation—regardless of whether or not they subscribe to the story in question—affirm that these verses had been Revealed at a time other than that during which the story of the goddesses had presumably taken place. To resort to the story of the goddesses in order to disprove the infallibility of the prophets in their conveyance of Divine messages not only runs counter to the whole history of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) but constitutes a fallacy of incoherent reasoning and, hence, a futile and perverse argument.

As for ''Every prophet We sent before you . . . these verses are utterly devoid of relation to the story of the goddesses. Moreover, they clearly affirm that Allah will abrogate all that the devil may bring forth, that Satan's work is only a lure to those who are sick of mind and hard of heart, and that God, the all-wise and all-knowing, would keep His scripture absolutely pure and true.

Fallacious Reasoning of the Claim

Let us now turn to a critical and scientific analysis of the story. The first evidence which imputes suspicion to the story is the fact that it has been reported in many forms and versions.

First there is the report that the fabricated verses consist of the following words: *"Titka al gharaniq al 'ula: 'Wa inna shafa-'atahunna* laturtajā." Others reported them as consisting of, *"al gharaniqah al 'ula: inna shafa'atahum turtajā.*" Still others reported that they consist of the following words, *"Inna shafa-'atahunna turtaja"* without mentioning the word *"al gharaniq"* or *"al gharaniqah"* at all. According to a fourth version, they

were supposed to consist of the words: *"Innaha lahiya at gharāniq al 'ulā."* A fifth version reads, *"We innahunna lahunna al gharāniq al 'ulā. wa inna shafā'atahunna lahiya allati turtaja."* The collections of Hadith have given us still more varied versions. The multiplicity of the versions proves that the report itself is fabricated, that it had been fabricated by the *zindiqs—as* ibn Ishaq had said earlier—and that the forgers had sought thereby to spread doubt into the message of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and to attack his candidness in conveying the message of his Lord.

The Story's Violence to the Contextual Flow of Sūrah "al Najm"

Another proof of the falsity of the story, stronger and more conclusive than the foregoing, is the fact that the contextual flow of ***surah*** "al Najm" does not allow at all the inclusion of such verses as the story claims. The ***sūrah*** reads:

﴿ لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ ءَايَٰتِ رَبِّهِ ٱلْكُبْرَىٰٓ ﴿١٨﴾ أَفَرَءَيْتُمُ ٱللَّٰتَ وَٱلْعُزَّىٰ ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَنَوٰةَ ٱلثَّالِثَةَ ٱلْأُخْرَىٰٓ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَلَكُمُ ٱلذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ ٱلْأُنثَىٰ ﴿٢١﴾ تِلْكَ إِذًا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَىٰٓ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِنْ هِىَ إِلَّآ أَسْمَآءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَآ أَنتُمْ وَءَابَآؤُكُم مَّآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ بِهَا مِن سُلْطَٰنٍ ۚ إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا ٱلظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى ٱلْأَنفُسُ ۖ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَهُم مِّن رَّبِّهِمُ ٱلْهُدَىٰٓ ﴿٢٣﴾ ﴾ سورة النجم الآيات ١٨-٢٣

(For truly did he see, of the Signs of his Lord, the Greatest! Have you seen Lat, and 'Uzza, And another, the

Third (goddess), Manat? What! for you the male sex, and for Him, the female? Behold, such would be indeed a division most unfair! These are nothing but names which you have devised, you and your fathers, for which Allah has sent down no authority (whatever). They follow nothing but conjecture and what their own souls desire, Even though there has already come to them Guidance from their Lord!) (An-Najm: 18-23)

The logical and literary flow of these verses is crystal-clear. *Al Lāt* and *al 'Uzzā* are mere names devoid of substance given by the past and present unbelievers to works of their own creation.

There is no deity such as the words name. The context does not allow any such addition as is here claimed. If, assuming such addition, the text were now to read: "Would you consider the case of al Lāt, al 'Uzzā, and of Manāt, the third goddess? These are the goddesses on high. Their intercession is to be sought. Would you then ascribe to allah the females and to yourselves the males? Wouldn't that be a wretched ascription ?" its corruption and outright self-contradiction become obvious. The text would have praised al Lāt, al 'Uzzā, and Manāt as well as condemned them within the space of four consecutive verses. Such a text cannot proceed from any rational being. The contextual background in which the addition is supposed to have been made furnishes unquestionable and final evidence that the story of the goddesses was a forgery. The forgers were probably the ***zindiqs;*** and the credulous whose minds are not naturally repulsed by the irrational and the incoherent, accepted the forgery and passed it as true.

The Linguistic Evidence

There is yet another argument advanced by the late Shaykh

Mohammad 'Abduh. It consists of the fact that the Arabs have nowhere described their gods in such terms as "al gharaniq." Neither in their poetry nor in their speeches or traditions do we find their gods or goodesses described in such terms. Rather, the word "al *ghurnuq*" or "*al gharniq*" was the name of a black or white water bird, sometimes given figuratively to the handsome blond youth. The fact is indubitable that the Arabs never looked upon their gods in this manner.

The Story Contradicts the Fact of Muhammad's Candidness (P. B.U.H)

There is yet one more final argument against the story of the goddesses that is based upon the nature of Muhammad's personal life (P.B.U.H). Ever since his childhood and throughout his adolescence, adulthood and maturity, he was never known to lie. So truthful was he that he had been nicknamed "al Amin" before he reached his twenty-fifth year of age. His truthfulness was unquestioned by anyone. He himself once addressed the Quraysh after his commission to prophethood: "Suppose I were to tell you that an enemy cavalry was advancing on the other side of this mountain, would you believe me?" His enemies themselves answered: "Yes, indeed! As far as we are concerned, you are innocent, for we have never found you to lie at all." How can we believe that such man who had been known to be truthful in his relations with his fellow men Frorn childhood to maturity, would be any less candid in his relation to Allah? How could such constant truthfulness allow him to lie and ascribe to his God that which He had not said? How could we believe that such a man did so in fear of the people and defiance of Almighty God? That is utterly impossible. Its impossibility is evident to all those who have studied these great, strong and distinguished souls of the prophets and religious leaders known for their dedication to

the truth *pereat mundus.* How can we reconcile such an allegation with Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) great declaration to his uncle that he will not adjure this cause even if his foes should put the sun in his right hand and the moon in his left? How can we accept such a claim when it imputes to the Prophet (P.B.U.H) the heinous charge of attributing to Allah that which Allah had not said, of violating the very foundation of the religion he was commissioned to proclaim and teach to mankind?

Furthermore, we may ask, when, according to the story, did Muhammad (P.B.U.H) turn to praise the gods of Quraysh? Ten years or so after his commission to prophethood, is the reply. But, then that is also after ten years of patient sufference of all kinds of injury and harm, all kinds of sacrifices, after Allah had reinforced Islam with the conversion of Hamzah and 'Umar, and, in short, after the Muslims had begun to feel themselves a significant power in Makkah and the news of their existence and exploits had begun to spread throughout Arabia, indeed to Abyssinia and other corners of the globe. Such a claim is not only uninformed, it is positively silly. The forgers of this story themselves must have realized its inadmissibility and sought to conceal its falsehood with the claim, "Muhammad (P.B.U.H) hardly heard Quraysh's words of reconciliation once he granted to their gods the honor of interceding with Allah, when his compromise appeared to him objectionable and he felt compelled to repent and to review the text of Revelation with the angel Gabriel when he visited him that same evening." This concealment, however, exposes the forgery rather than hides it. As long as the compromise appeared objectionable to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) no later than he had "heard Quraysh's words of reconciliation," would he have not paused to reconsider it immediately and on the spot?

How natural it would have been then for him instantly to recite the true version of the text! We may, therefore, conclude that this story of the goddesses is a fabrication and a forgery,

authored by the enemies of Islam after the first century of the Hijrah.

Attack upon Tawhid

The forgers must have been extremely bold to have attempted their forgery in the most essential principal of Islam as a whole:

namely, in the principle of ***tawhid,*** where Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had been sent right from the very beginning to make proclamations to all mankind in which he has never accepted any compromise whatever; he was never swayed by anything the Quraysh had offered him whether by way of wealth or royal power. These offers had come, it must be remembered, at a time when Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had very few followers within Makkah. Later persecution by the Quraysh of his companions did not succeed in swaying Muhammad (P.B.U.H) away from the call of his Allah or away from his mission. The ***zindiqs'*** strategy to work their forgery around the first principle of the faith, where Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was known to be the most adamant, only points to their own inconsequence. Acceptance of the forgery by the credulous only points to their naiveté in the most conspicuous of cases.

The story of the goddesses, therefore, is absolutely devoid of foundation. It is utterly unrelated to the return of the Muslims from Abyssinia. As we said earlier, the latter returned after the conversion of 'Umar, the strengthening of Islam with the same tribal solidarity with which he used to fight Islam hitherto, and the compulsion of Quraysh to enter into an armistice with the Muslims. Moreover, the Muslims' return from Abyssinia was partly due to the revolution which had broken out in that country and to their consequent fear of losing the Negus's protection. When the Quraysh learned of the Muslims' return, their fears

reached a new level of intensity with the increase of Muhammad's followers (P.B.U.H) within the city, and, therefore, they sought a new strategy. Their search for a new strategy was concluded with the signing of a pact in which they and their allied clans and tribes resolved to boycott the Banu Hashim in order to prevent any intermarriage with them, to stop all commercial relations and finally, to seek to kill Muhammad (P.B.U.H) if they could only find the means.

7

The Malevolent Conduct of Quraysh

The conversion of 'Umar to Islam reduced the power of Quraysh significantly in that 'Umar brought with him to the faith the tribal loyalties with which he had fought Islam earlier. He did not hide himself or conceal his Islam. On the contrary he proclaimed it to all the people and fought them for not joining him. He did not at all approve of the Muslims' hiding themselves or holding prayers in the outskirts of Makkah far beyond the Quraysh's reach. He continued to struggle against the Quraysh until he could pray near the Ka'bah where his fellow Muslims joined him. Henceforth, Quraysh became certain that no injury inflicted upon Muhammad (P.B.U.H) or his companions would stop men from entering the religion of Allah since they could now rely upon the tribal protection of 'Umar, Hamzah, the Negus of Abyssinia, or others capable of protecting them. The Quraysh then sought a new strategy, and agreed among themselves to a written pact in which they resolved to boycott Banū Hāshim and Banū 'Abd al Muttalib completely, prevent any intermarriage with them, and stop all commercial relations. The written pact itself was hung inside the Ka'bah, as was then the practice, for record and sanctification. They thought that this negative policy of boycott, isolation, and starvation would be

more effective than the previous policy of harm and injury, though the latter was never stopped. The Quraysh blockaded the Muslims as well as the Banū Hāshim and Banā 'Abd al Muttalib for two or three years during which time they hoped that these tribes would renounce Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and thus cause him to fall under the hand of Quraysh. They had hoped that such a measure would isolate Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and remove all danger from his mission.

The new strategy of Quraysh served only to strengthen Muhammad's faith (P.B.U.H) in Allah and his followers' determination to protect his person and Allah's religion against attack. It did not prevent the spreading of Islam, not only within the bounds of Makkah but outside of it as well. Muhammad's mission (P.B.U.H) became widely known among the Arabs of the Peninsula, and the new religion became the subject of conversation everywhere. This growth, in turn, increased the fury and determination of Qtiraysh to oppose and fight the man who abandoned and blasphemed her gods and to prevent the spread of his cause among the Arab tribes. Loyalty of these tribes was indispensible for Makkan commerce and trade relations with other people.

The Arm of Propaganda

It is nearly impossible for us to imagine the intensity and extent of the efforts which Quraysh spent in its struggle against Muhammad (P.B.U.H), or its perseverence during many long years in that struggle. The Quraysh threatened Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his relatives, especially his uncles. It ridiculed him and his message, and it insulted him as well as his followers. It commissioned its poets to revile him with their sharpest wits and to direct their most caustic sting against his preaching. It inflicted injury and harm on his person and on the persons of his

followers. It offered him bribes of money, of royalty and power, of all that which satisfies the most fastidious among men. It not only banished and dispersed his followers from their own country but injured them in their trade and commerce while impoverishing them. It warned him and his followers that war with all its tragedies would fall upon them. As a last resort, it began a boycott of them designed to starve them. All this notwithstanding, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) continued to call men with kind and gentle argument unto the Allah of truth who sent him as a prophet (P.B.U.H) and a warner. Would Quraysh lay down its arms and believe the man whom it had always known to be truthful and honest? Or would they, under the illusion that they could still win, resort to new means of hostility to save the divine status of their idols and the hallowed position of Makkah as their museum?

No: The time had not yet come for the Quraysh to submit and to convert to the new faith. Rather, they were more apprehensive than ever when the religion began to spread outside of Makkah within the Arab tribes. They had still another weapon which, though they had used it right from the very beginning, was yet capable of more power and damage. That was propaganda, or mental warfare, with all it implies by way of debate, counter-argument, spreading of false rumors, ridicule of the opponent's point of view, and positive apologetics in favor of their own view. The development of this weapon was not to be limited to Makkah but would apply to the whole countryside, to the whole desert, and to the tribes of the Peninsula. Threat, bribery, aggression. and gangsterism allayed the need for propaganda within Makkah. There was a great need for it, however, among the thousands who came into Makkah every year for trade or pilgrimage, and among the attendants of the markets of 'Ukāz, Majannah, and Dhū al Majāz, who later arrived at the Ka'bah for thanksgiving and worship near the Ka'bah idols. Therefore, it was expedient for the Quraysh, the moment the

lines of battle against Muhammad (P.B.U.H) were clearly drawn, to plan and organize its propaganda forces. It had all the more reason to do so since Muhammad (P.B.U.H) himself had always taken the initiative of approaching the pilgrim and addressing him on the subject of restricting worship to Allah alone without associates. The idea of such initiative did not occur to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) until years after his commission to prophethood. At the beginning, Revelation had commanded him to warn his nearest relatives. It was only after he had warned Quraysh and those who wanted to convert had converted that his Revelation commanded him now to address his warning to the Arabs as a whole. He was later to be commanded to address his call to all mankind.

The Charge of Magical Eloquence

As Muhammad (P.B.U.H) began to approach the pilgrims coming from various corners of Arabia with his call to Allah, a number of Quraysh leaders met with al Walid ibn al Mughirah to consult for a possible strategy. What would they say regarding Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to the Arabs coming for pilgrimage? Their answers to this question should be universally the same; otherwise they would constitute arguments in favor of Muhammad's claims (P.B.U.H). Some suggested that they should claim that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was a diviner. Al Walid rejected this suggestion on the grounds that what Muhammad recited was unlike the secret formulae of common diviners. Others suggested that they should claim that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was possessed or mad. Al Walid again rejected this view on the grounds that the symptoms of madness or possession were not apparent in Muhammad (P.B.U.H). Still others suggested that they should claim that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was a magician, but al Walid again rejected this view on the grounds

that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) did not practice the common tricks of magicians. After some discussion, al Walid suggested that they should tell the non-Makkan Arab pilgrim that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was a magician whose craft was eloquence—that by means of eloquent words he was capable of dividing the man against his father, his brother, his spouse and his own tribe. Al Walid advised that they could produce evidence for such nefarious eloquence by pointing to the division which befell Makkah after Muhammad (P.B.U.H) began to practice his craft. Any consideration of the present division, internal struggle, and internecine fighting raging among the Makkans who were once the exemplars of tribal solidarity and social unity would convince the observer that Muhammad's influence (P.B.U.H) had brought the worst. During the pilgrimage season the Quraysh made a special effort to warn every visitor to Makkah against ever lending his ear to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) for fear that he would be mesmerized by his magic eloquence and then suffer in turn the same evils that had befallen Makkah and thus bring about a general war in Arabia detrimental to all.

Al Nadr ibn al Hārith

A mental warfare of such order could not be expected to withstand or counteract Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) so-called magic eloquence all alone. If genuine truth were to come on the wings of this so-called magic eloquence, what would prevent the people from accepting it? Is the acknowledgment of the distinction of the antagonist and the acknowledgment of the inferiority of the protagonist ever successful as a propaganda weapon? There must needs be other fronts on which to attack Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in addition to this proposed mental warfare. Let the Quraysh seek this second front with al Nadr ibn al Hārith. The said al Nadr was one of the sophisticated geniuses

of Quraysh. He had studied at al Hirah the history, religion, wisdom, theories of good and evil, cosmology, and other literature of the Persians. Whenever Muhammad (P.B.U.H) finished preaching his faith in an assembly calling men to Allah, and warning them of the consequences on the Day of Judgment—taking the bygone peoples and civilizations as examples of such divine punishment for failure to worship Allah— al Nadr would rise and tell his fellow Makkans about Persia and its religion. He would conclude by asking the assembly, "Why is Muhammad's speech (P.B.U.H) better than mine? Does he not draw from the tales of antiquity just as I do?" The Quraysh used to memorize al Nadr's speeches and statements and circulate them around and outside Makkah as counter—measures to the claims of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his message.

Jabr, the Christian

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) used to tarry at the shop of a Christian youth called Jabr whenever he passed by the Marwah quarter of Makkah. The Quraysh took advantage of the fact and began to spread the rumor that this Christian Jabr had taught Muhammad (P.B.U.H) all that he knew and that if anyone were expected to apostatize from the religion of his ancestors, the Christian should be the first one to do so. As this rumor spread, revelation itself answered the claim in the verse:

﴿ وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُۥ بَشَرٌ ۗ لِّسَانُ ٱلَّذِى يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجَمِىٌّ وَهَٰذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِىٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾ ﴾

سورة النحل آية ١٠٣

(We know indeed that they say, "It is a man that teaches him." The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear.) (Al-Nahal:103)

Al Tufayl ibn 'Amr al Dawsi

With this and like feats of propaganda the Quraysh sought to fight Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in hope of achieving by these means more than they did by means of injury and harm to his person and followers. The clear and simple might of truth, however, shone brilliantly in Muhammad's preaching. While the struggle between the two forces continued, Islam spread more and more widely among the Arabs. When al Tufayl ibn 'Amr al Dawsi, a nobleman of great poetic talent, arrived in Makkah, he was immediately approached by the Quraysh and warned against Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his magical eloquence. They admonished him that Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) craft might well divide him and his people and that his tribe might well suffer the same evil as had befallen Makkah. They asked him not to visit Muhammad (P.B.U.H) or hear him if he wanted to avoid the evil. Al Tufayl, however, went one day to the Ka'bah and there heard a little of the preaching of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and liked it. He then thought, "Woe to me! Am I, the intelligent poet, the mature man, to fear that I may not distinguish between the genuinely beautiful and the really ugly in human discourse? Shouldn't I go to Muhammad (P.B.U.H), hear all that he has to say and apply my own judgment? If I should find it good, why shouldn't I accept it? And if I find it evil, surely I shall avoid it." He followed Muhammad (P.B.U.H) one day to his house and there told him exactly what he thought and what he had decided. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) welcomed him, presented to him the new religion, and recited for him the Qur'ān. Al Tufayl was

immediately converted, recited the confession of truth, and returned to his people a missionary for Islam. He was responsible for the conversion of many, though not all, of his tribesmen. For many years, he continued his missionary activity and succeeded in converting the greater number of them. He and they joined themselves to the forces of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) after the conquest of Makkah once the political structure of the Islamic community began to crystallize.

Al Tufayl ibn 'Amr al Dawsi is only one of many examples. The idol worshippers were not the only ones responding favorably to the message of Muhammad (P.B.U.H). While Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was still in Makkah, twenty Christian men arrived, sent by their own people on a fact-finding mission concerning the new faith. They sat with Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and asked him all kinds of questions and listened to him. They, too, were converted on the spot, believed in Muhammad and in the Revelation. This conversion aroused great anger and resentment among the Quraysh. Indeed the latter addressed the new converts in these words: "Wretched fact-finding mission that you are! Your fellow religionists sent you here in order to investigate the man and bring them the factual news concerning him. But you have hardly sat down with him before you apostatized from your religion and believed him everything he said." In vain did the Quraysh try to dissuade the Christian delegation from following Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and converting to his faith. On the contrary, the Quraysh's attack against their sincerity had strengthened their faith in Allah and added to their monotheistic convictions since, before they heard Muhammad (P.B.U.H), they were already Christian and hence submissive to Allah.

Abū Sufyān, Abū Jahl, and al Akhnas

The struggle against Muhammad (P.B.U.H) reached even greater proportions. The most antagonistic of the Quraysh began

to ask themselves: "Is it true that this man is really calling unto the religion of truth? That what he promises us and threatens us with in the hereafter is true?" Abū Sufyan, Abū Jahl and al Akhnas ibn Shariq went out one night to hear Muhammad (P.B.U.H) preach in his own house without any one of them knowing what the other was about. Unobserved by his colleagues, each one of them took his place in some corner and spent the night listening to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) preach, then pray and recite the Qur'ān in the still of night, cantillating its holy verses with his beautiful voice. As dawn arrived and the three auditors repaired to their houses, they met one another on the road. Each one of them knew what the others were about and blamed the others for such behavior. Arguing that this would be a blow to the morale of the rank and file of the Quraysh if they ever knew of it, they mutually promised one another never to do it again. When the following night came, however, and the hours of yesterday struck, each one of them felt as if he were being carried to the house of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) without being able to stop himself. An irresistible power was drawing them to spend another night of listening to Muhammad's prayer (P.B.U.H), preaching, and cantillation of the divine verses. Again they met one another at dawn on their way back and blamed one another anew. Even this repeated violation of their mutual threat and promise did not prevent them from going to the same place the third night. It was only after the third violation that they realized their weakness and the strong attraction they felt toward the voice of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), his faith, and Qur'ānic recitation. They pledged solemnly never to return again, but what they had heard from Muhammad (P.B.U.H) during the three previous nights left such a deep impression upon their souls that it disturbed their inner peace and reduced their spirit of resistance. Naturally, they were quite apprehensive that, being leaders of their people, their inner disturbance would some day be discovered by their followers and sap the morale of the whole community.

"He Frowned and Turned Away"

What prevented these men from following Muhammad (P.B.U.H)? He had not asked of them either reward or power or kingship. Rather, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was a very modest man, full of love for his people, anxious to do good to them and to guide them in the true path. He was both strongly self-critical and fearful of bringing the least harm to the weak or the oppressed. In suffering the injuries inflicted upon him by others and forgiving their authors, he found peace and tranquility of conscience. Evidence of this personal characteristic of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) may be found in the story of ibn Umm Maktūm. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was once involved in serious conversation with al Walid ibn al Mughirah, one of the leading aristocrats of Quraysh, whom he hoped he would convert to Islam. Ibn Umm Maktūm, the blind, stopped by and asked Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to recite some Qur'ānic verses for him. Preoccupied with his conversation, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) did not answer. Ibn Umm Maktūm insisted until he interrupted the conversation. of the two men, to the severe annoyance of Muhammad(P.B.U.H). The conversation thus abruptly ended, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) frowned, gave an angry look to the blind man and moved on without satisfying his request. When Muhammad (P.B.U.H) came to himself, he began to criticize himself for this maltreatment of the blind man, and soon the following verses were revealed to him (P.B.U.H):

﴿ عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّىٰٓ ۝١ أَن جَآءَهُ ٱلۡأَعۡمَىٰ ۝٢ وَمَا يُدۡرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُۥ يَزَّكَّىٰٓ
۝٣ أَوۡ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنفَعَهُ ٱلذِّكۡرَىٰٓ ۝٤ أَمَّا مَنِ ٱسۡتَغۡنَىٰ ۝٥ فَأَنتَ لَهُۥ
تَصَدَّىٰ ۝٦ وَمَا عَلَيۡكَ أَلَّا يَزَّكَّىٰ ۝٧ وَأَمَّا مَن جَآءَكَ يَسۡعَىٰ ۝٨ وَهُوَ

يَخْشَىٰ ﴿٩﴾ فَأَنتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّىٰ ﴿١٠﴾ كَلَّآ إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ ﴿١١﴾ فَمَن شَآءَ ذَكَرَهُۥ ﴿١٢﴾ فِى صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ ﴿١٣﴾ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍۭ ﴿١٤﴾ بِأَيْدِى سَفَرَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾ كِرَامٍۭ بَرَرَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾ ﴾ سورة عبس الآيات ١ - ١٦

(The Prophet) frowned and turned away, Because there came to him the blind man (interrupting). But what could tell you but that perchance he might grow in purity Or that he might receive admonition, and the Riminder might profit him? As to one who regards himself as self-sufficient, To him you attend; Though it is no blame on you if he grow not in purity. But as to him who came to you striving earnestly, And with fear (in his heart), Of him you were unmindful. By no means (should it be so)! For it is indeed a Message of remembrance. Therefore let whose will, keep it in remembrance. (It is) in Books held (greatly) in honour, Exalted (in dignity), kept pure and holy, (Written) by the hands of scribes, Honourable and Pious and Just.) (Abasa:1-16)

If such was Muhammad's character(P.B.U.H), what did in fact prevent the Quraysh from following him and from helping him in his cause, especially as their hearts had mellowed, as the years had caused them to forget the obsolete traditions to which they had lethargically attached themselves, and as they saw in Muhammad's message (P.B.U.H) true majesty and perfection?

The Will to Perfection

But is it true that time makes men forget their obsolete past and lethargic conservatism? Perhaps so, but only among those

who are endowed with superior intelligence and a will to perfection. Such people spend their lives trying out and testing the truth which they have taken to be such in order to keep it free of admixture, superstition, and error. The minds and hearts of such people are cauldrons forever boiling, accepting every new idea in order but to boil it down, purify it, and separate its good from its evil as well as its beauty from its ugliness. Such souls seek the truth in everything, everywhere, and from every source. In every nation and age, such people are few; they are the chosen and the distinguished. Such men always find themselves on the other side of any contest with the rich, the established, and the powerful. The latter are forever apprehensive of anything new lest it may adversely affect their wealth, prestige, or power and, generally speaking, they do not know any other facts besides those of concrete everyday living. Everything is true, in their opinion, if it leads to an increase in the substance of this very life, and false if it implies the slightest doubt regarding that substance. For the capitalist, virtue is good if it increases the substance, evil if it dissipates it. Religion itself, is indeed true only if it serves his passions and desires, and false if it denies or fails to satisfy them.

The man of political power and the man of social prestige stand here on a par with the capitalist. In their enmity to everything new and fearful, they mobilize the masses on whom their wealth, social prestige, or power depend against the innovator. This mobilization of the masses is carried out under an appeal to save the sanctity of the old order which may very well have become corrupt, obsolete, and spiritless. They present the old order they seek to save in great monuments of stone designed to delude the innocent rank and file. They pretend that the great spirit and value which moulded those monuments still lives therein with all its majesty and grandeur. The masses usually respond to their appeal with enthusiasm, for they are above all concerned with their daily bread; it is not easy for them

to realize that any truth cannot remain for long imprisoned within the walls of any temple or monument, however beautiful or majestic it may be. It is hard for them to understand that it is of the nature of truth to be free, to invade the souls of men and to nourish them without discrimination between nobleman and slave; that no matter how hardily a system may defend itself against the truth and how closely it may be protected, the truth is always bound to win. How then could those Quraysh leaders who were seeking to listen to the Qur'ān in secret, believe in its call when it proclaimed the wrath of Allah against the very practices which they were doing? How could they believe in a religion which did not differentiate between the blind pauper and the great capitalist except as regards the purity of their own souls? How could they believe in the call of Islam unto all men that

﴿ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ ﴾ سورة الحجرات آية ١٣

(Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you.) (Al-Hujurat:13)

If, therefore, Abū Sufyan and his colleagues remained true to the religion of their ancestors, it was not due to their faith in its truth-value. Rather, it was due to their zeal to preserve the old order that not only protected them.but also enabled them to achieve their position of wealth, social prestige, and power.

Jealousy and Competition

In addition to this anxiety and despair, jealousy and competition did their work to prevent the Quraysh from following the Prophet (P.B.U.H). Umayyah ibn Abū al Salt was one of those

who predicted the rise of a prophet (P.B.U.H) among the Arabs; indeed, he hoped that he himself was such a prophet. He was full of resentment and jealousy when Revelation came to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) rather than to him; he could not, despite his own superiority over Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as far as poetical composition is concerned; follow a person whom he believed was his competitor. When Muhammad (P.B.U.H) heard the poetry of Ummayyah, he exclaimed: "What a man is Urn-mayyah! His poetry believes, but his heart does not." Likewise, al Walid ibn al Mughirah said: "It is incomprehensible to me that Revelations would come to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and not to me while I am the greatest elder and master of Quraysh. Neither do I understand that revelation would not come to Abū Mas'ūd 'Amr ibn 'Umayr al Thaqafi, the elder and master of Thaqif." It was in reference to such commonplace sentiments that the Qur'ān says:

﴿ وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هَٰذَا ٱلْقُرْءَانُ عَلَىٰ رَجُلٍ مِّنَ ٱلْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ ۚ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُم مَّعِيشَتَهُمْ فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا ۚ ﴾ سورة الزخرف الآيتان ٣١-٣٢

(Also, they say: "Why is not this Qur'an sent down to some leading man in either of the two (chief) cities?" Is it they who would portion out the Mercy of your Lord? It is We Who portion out between them their livelihood in the life of this world: and We raise some of them above others in ranks, so that some may command work from others. But the Mercy of your Lord is better than the (wealth) which they amass.) (Az-Zukhruf: 31-32)

After Abū Sufyan, Abū Jahl, and al Akhnas had listened for three consecutive nights to Muhammad's recitation (P.B.U.H) of the Qur'ān, as we have reported earlier, al Akhnas visited Abū

Jahl in his home and asked, "0 Abū al Hakam, what do you think of what we heard from Muhammad (P.B.U.H) ?" Abū Jahl answered, "What did you hear? Our house and the house of Banū 'Abd Manāf have been competing for the honor: They have given the people to eat and so did we; they have carried the water to the pilgrims and so did we; they have assumed other burdens and so did we, they have given and so did we. Whenever we and they mount on our horses it always looks as if we are in a Race. Now they are saying, among us is a prophet (P.B.U.H) to whom revelation comes straight from heaven! When, if ever, will we achieve such a feat? Now, by Allah, we shall never believe in their prophet:

we shall never accept what he says as true."

In these Bedouin souls of Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) contemporaries, jealously and competition were deeply rooted, and it would be a great mistake to overlook them. We should remember that such passions are not unique to the Arabs but are shared by all men. To neutralize their effects or get rid of them demands long and arduous self-discipline, a radical self-transformation that raises reason far above passion and ennobles one's spirit and heart to the degree of acknowledging the truth whithersoever it may come from, be he enemy or friend. It also demands believing that the possession of the truth is more precious than all the wealth of Midas, the glory of Alexander, or the power of Caesar. Such nobility and magnaminity of soul is hardly ever reached except by those whose hearts Allah Himself guides. Commonplace men are usually blinded by the wealth and pleasure of the world and by the present moment in which alone they spent their lives. Obviously, they are unable to rise to such spiritual height. In pursuit of quick satisfaction during the fleeting present, they struggle, fight, and kill one another. For its sake, nothing seems to prevent any of them from striking his teeth and claws into the very neck of truth, goodness and virtue, and from trampling to death the noblest and highest values.

Seeing Muhammad's followers (P.B.U.H) increasing in numbers and strength day by day, the Arabs of Quraysh were horrified by the idea that the truth which Muhammad (P.B.U.H) proclaimed would one day achieve victory and power over them, over their allies and beyond, and over all the Arabs of the Peninsula. Heads shall roll rather than allow such a thing to happen, they thought. Counter-propaganda and mental warfare, boycott, blockade, injury and harm, persecution— all these and the vials of wrath shall be poured over Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his followers.

Fear of Resurrection and the Day of Judgment

A third reason prevented the Quraysh from following Muhammad (P.B.U.H), namely, the terror of the resurrection on the Day of Judgment with its punishment of hell. They were a people immersed in recreation and the pursuit of pleasure; trade and usury were their means to its attainment. Those of them who could afford to indulge in these pursuits did not see in them anything immoral and felt no imperative to avoid them. Through their idol worship they thought that their evil deeds and sins could all be atoned for and forgiven. It was sufficient for a man to strike a few arrows at the foot of the statue of Hubal for him to think that anything he was about to undertake was blessed if not commanded by the Allah. It was sufficient to sacrifice something to these idols for him to have his sins and guilt wiped out and forgotten. Therefore, to kill, to rob, to commit adultery, to indulge in unbecoming speech and indecency were all proper and permissible as long as one was capable of bribing those gods and placating them with sacrifices.

On the other hand, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was proclaiming that the Lord was standing in wait for them, that they will be resurrected on the day of judgment, and that their works will be their only credit. Moreover, he did so with verses of such

tremendous power that they shook men's hearts to the foundation and threw their consciousness into horror and panic. The Qur'ān proclaimed:

﴿ فَإِذَا جَآءَتِ ٱلصَّآخَّةُ (٣٣) يَوۡمَ يَفِرُّ ٱلۡمَرۡءُ مِنۡ أَخِيهِ (٣٤) وَأُمِّهِۦ
وَأَبِيهِ (٣٥) وَصَٰحِبَتِهِۦ وَبَنِيهِ (٣٦) لِكُلِّ ٱمۡرِيٍٕ مِّنۡهُمۡ يَوۡمَئِذٖ شَأۡنٞ يُغۡنِيهِ
(٣٧) وُجُوهٞ يَوۡمَئِذٖ مُّسۡفِرَةٞ (٣٨) ضَاحِكَةٞ مُّسۡتَبۡشِرَةٞ (٣٩) وَوُجُوهٞ يَوۡمَئِذٍ
عَلَيۡهَا غَبَرَةٞ (٤٠) تَرۡهَقُهَا قَتَرَةٌ (٤١) أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلۡكَفَرَةُ ٱلۡفَجَرَةُ (٤٢) ﴾

سورة عبس الآيات ٣٣-٤٢

(At length, when there comes the Deafening Noise, That Day shall a man flee from his own brother, And from his mother and his father, And from his wife and his children. Each one of them, that Day, will have enough concern (of his own) to make him indifferent to the others. Some Faces that Day will be beaming, laughing, rejoicing. And other faces that Day will be dust-stained; Darkness will cover them: Such will be the Rejecters of Allah, the Doers of Iniquity.) (Abasa: 33-42)

﴿ يَوۡمَ تَكُونُ ٱلسَّمَآءُ كَٱلۡمُهۡلِ (٨) وَتَكُونُ ٱلۡجِبَالُ كَٱلۡعِهۡنِ (٩) وَلَا
يَسۡـَٔلُ حَمِيمٌ حَمِيمٗا (١٠) يُبَصَّرُونَهُمۡۚ يَوَدُّ ٱلۡمُجۡرِمُ لَوۡ يَفۡتَدِي مِنۡ عَذَابِ
يَوۡمِئِذِۭ بِبَنِيهِ (١١) وَصَٰحِبَتِهِۦ وَأَخِيهِ (١٢) وَفَصِيلَتِهِ ٱلَّتِي تُـٔۡوِيهِ (١٣) وَمَن

فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يُنجِيهِ ﴿١٤﴾ كَلَّآ ۖ إِنَّهَا لَظَىٰ ﴿١٥﴾ نَزَّاعَةً لِّلشَّوَىٰ ﴿١٦﴾ تَدْعُوا۟ مَنْ أَدْبَرَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ ﴿١٧﴾ وَجَمَعَ فَأَوْعَىٰٓ ﴿١٨﴾ ﴾

سورة المعارج الآيات ٨-١٨

(The Day that the sky will be like molten brass, And the mountains will be like wool, And no friend will ask after a friend, Though they will be put in sight of each other, the sinner's desire will be: would that he could redeem himself from the Chastisement of that Day by his children, His wife and his brother, His kindred who sheltered him. And all, all that is on earth, so it could deliver him: By no means! For it would be the Blazing Fire Plucking out (his being) right to the skull! Inviting (all) such as turn their backs andturn away their faces (from the Right), And collect (wealth) and hide it (from use) (Al-Ma'arij: 8-18)

﴿ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُونَ لَا تَخْفَىٰ مِنكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ ﴿١٨﴾ فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِىَ كِتَـٰبَهُۥ بِيَمِينِهِۦ فَيَقُولُ هَآؤُمُ ٱقْرَءُوا۟ كِتَـٰبِيَهْ ﴿١٩﴾ إِنِّى ظَنَنتُ أَنِّى مُلَـٰقٍ حِسَابِيَهْ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَهُوَ فِى عِيشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ ﴿٢١﴾ فِى جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ قُطُوفُهَا دَانِيَةٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ كُلُوا۟ وَٱشْرَبُوا۟ هَنِيٓـًٔا بِمَآ أَسْلَفْتُمْ فِى ٱلْأَيَّامِ ٱلْخَالِيَةِ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِىَ كِتَـٰبَهُۥ بِشِمَالِهِۦ فَيَقُولُ يَـٰلَيْتَنِى لَمْ أُوتَ كِتَـٰبِيَهْ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَمْ أَدْرِ مَا حِسَابِيَهْ ﴿٢٦﴾ يَـٰلَيْتَهَا كَانَتِ ٱلْقَاضِيَةَ ﴿٢٧﴾ مَآ أَغْنَىٰ عَنِّى مَالِيَهْ ۜ ﴿٢٨﴾ هَلَكَ عَنِّى سُلْطَـٰنِيَهْ ﴿٢٩﴾ خُذُوهُ فَغُلُّوهُ ﴿٣٠﴾ ثُمَّ ٱلْجَحِيمَ صَلُّوهُ ﴿٣١﴾

ثُمَّ فِي سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوهُ ﴿٣٢﴾ إِنَّهُ كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا يَحُضُّ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَلَيْسَ لَهُ الْيَوْمَ هَاهُنَا حَمِيمٌ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَلَا طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ غِسْلِينٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ لَّا يَأْكُلُهُ إِلَّا الْخَاطِئُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ ﴾

سورة الحاقة الآيات ١٨-٣٧

(That Day shall you be brought to Judgment: not an act of yours that you hide will be hidden. Then he that will be given his Record in his right hand will say: "Ah here! Read my Record! "I did really think that my Account would (one Day) reach me!" And he will be in a life of Bliss, In a Garden on high, The Fruits whereof (will hang in bunches) low and near. "Eat and drink, with full satisfaction; because of the (good) that you sent before you, in the days that are gone!" And he that will be given his Record in his left hand will say: "Ah! Would that my Record had not been given to me! "And that I had never realised how my account (stood)!" "Ah! Would that (Death) had made an end of me!" "Of no profit to me has been my wealth!" "My power has perished from me!" (The stern command will say): "Seize him in the Blazing Fire.

"Further, insert him in a chain, whereof the length is seventy cubits! "This was he that would not believe in Allah Most High, "And would not encourage the feeding of the indigent!"So no friend has he here this Day." "Nor has he any food except the foul pus from the washing of wounds, "Which none do eat but those in sin.") (Al-Haqqah: 18-37)

After this I may ask the reader: Have you read this well? Did you ponder every word of it? Have you fully understood its meaning? Are you not petrified and panic stricken? But that is

only a portion of Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) warning to his people. You read these verses today and remember that you have read them many times over before. Concurrently with your reading, you will remember the Qur'ān's description of hell.

﴿ يَوْمَ نَقُولُ لِجَهَنَّمَ هَلِ ٱمْتَلَأْتِ وَتَقُولُ هَلْ مِن مَّزِيدٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ ﴾

سورة ق آية ٣٠

(One Day We will ask Hell, "Are you filled to the full?" It will say, "Are there any more (to come)?") (Qaf: 30)

﴿ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ بِـَٔايَـٰتِنَا سَوْفَ نُصْلِيهِمْ نَارًا كُلَّمَا نَضِجَتْ جُلُودُهُم بَدَّلْنَـٰهُمْ جُلُودًا غَيْرَهَا لِيَذُوقُوا۟ ٱلْعَذَابَ ﴾

سورة النساء آية ٥٦

(Those who reject Our Sings, We shall soon cast into the Fire; as often as their skins are roasted through, We shall change them for fresh skins, that they may taste the Chastisement) (An-Nisaa: 56)

You can well imagine then the horror which must have struck Quraysh, especially the rich among them wallowing in the protection of their gods and idols whenever Muhammad (P.B.U.H) warned them of the imminent punishment. It would then become easy for you to appreciate the degree of their enthusiasm in belying Muhammad (P.B.U.H), opposing him, and urging the people to fight him (P.B.U.H). Previous to the Prophet's preaching, the Arabs had no idea of the Day of Judgment or of the resurrection, and they did not believe what they heard thereof from non-Arabs. None of them thought that he would be reckoned with after death for what he had done in

this world. Whatever concern they had for the future was limited to this world. They feared disease, loss of wealth and children, of power and social prestige. This life, to them, was all there is to life. Their energies were exhausted in the amassing of the means with which to enjoy this life and to keep it safe from misfortune. The future was utterly opaque. Whenever their consciences were disturbed by a premonition of evil following upon their misdeeds, they had recourse to divination by arrows, pebbles, or bird-chasing in order to dissipate the fear or confirm it. If confirmed they would sacrifice to their idols and thereby avoid the imminent misfortune.

As for reckoning after death, resurrection, and the Day of Judgment—paradise for the virtuous and hell for the unjust— all this completely escaped them despite the fact that they had heard of it in connection with the religion of the Jews and of the Christians. Nonetheless, they never heard of it described with such emphatic, frightening, indeed horrifying, terms and seriousness such as Muhammad's Revelation (P.B.U.H) had brought to them. What they had heard of before Muhammad (P.B.U.H) never succeeded in pressing home to them the recognition that their continued life of pleasure, pursuit of wealth, exploitation of the weak, robbery of the orphan, neglect of the poor, and excess in usury, would surely incur eternal punishment. They had no idea of impending suffering in the depth of hell, and when they heard of it described in these terms, it was natural for them to be seized with panic. How strongly they must have felt when they realized, though they did not openly admit it, that the other world with its reward and punishment is truly there, waiting for them only one step beyond this life which was soon to end in death!

Quraysh and Paradise

As for Allah's promise to the virtuous of a paradise as large as heaven and earth, where there is neither evil word nor deed but only peace and blessedness, the Quraysh were quite

suspicious. They doubted paradise all the more because of their attachment to this world and their anxiousness to enjoy its blessings right here and now. They were too impatient to wait for the Day of Judgment though they did not believe in any such day at all.

The Struggle of Good and Evil

One may indeed wonder how the Arabs locked their minds against any idea of the other world and its reckoning when the struggle of good and evil in this world has been raging eternally without let-up or peace. Thousands of years before Muhammad (P.B.U.H), the ancient Egyptians provided their dead with their needs for the other world. In the coffins, they enclosed ***The Book of the Dead,*** which was full of psalms, invocations, and other prayers, and in their graves they painted pictures of judgment and scenes of repentance and punishment. The Indians, too, conceived of the other world in terms of Nirvana and transmigration of souls. A soul, they held, may suffer for thousands and millions of years before it is guided to the truth, purified, and rehabilitated to the good life at the end of which is Nirvana. Likewise, the Zoroastrians of Persia recognized the struggle of good and evil, and their gods were gods of light and darkness. So, too, did the Mosaic and the Christian religions, both of which describe a life of eternity dependent upon God's pleasure or wrath. Did the Arabs not know any of all this, though they were a people of trade in continual contact through their voyages with all the adherents of these religions? How could the case be otherwise? Why did they not have similar notions of their own when, as people of the desert, they were closer to infinity and eternity, to a conception of the spiritual existence induced by the heat of noon and the darkness of night, to good and evil spirits, which they had already conceived of as residing within the statues which interceded for them with God? Undoubtedly, they must have had an idea of the existence of the

other world, but since they were a people of trade, they were more realistic and hence appreciative of that which they could see and touch. They were one and all ***bon vivants*** and, hence, all the more determined to deny punishment or reward in the hereafter. They thought that what man needs in this world is precisely the consequence of his deed whether good or evil. Further consequences of his deeds in the other world were therefore superfluous. That is why most of the Revelations of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) which warned, threatened, and made promises concerning the other world were revealed in Makkah at the beginning of Muhammad's commission. This Revelation answered the need for saving those among whom Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was sent. It was natural that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) draw their attention as strongly as he could to their error and misguidance and that he call them to rise above idol worship to the worship of the One Almighty God.

For the Sake of Salvation

In the course of bringing spiritual salvation to his people and to all mankind, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his followers suffered great harm. They were subjected to many travails of body and spirit, to emigration, to alienation from peers and relatives, and they bore these sacrifices with gallantry and patience. It was as if the more his people harmed Muhammad (P.B.U.H), the stronger became his love for them and the greater his desire and care to bring about their salvation. Resurrection and the Day of Judgment were the supreme ideas to which they were to give their attention if they were to be saved from their idolatry and evil deeds. Consequently, in the first years of Muhammad's prophethood (P.B.U.H), Revelation constantly repeated Divine threats and warnings that the Makkans might open their eyes and recognize the veracity of resurrection and the Day of Judgment.

It was this constant assault by Revelation which, in final analysis, had inflamed the terrible war between Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and Makkah whose rage did not subside until Allah had given victory to Islam, His religion, over the religions of man.

8

From the Violation of the Boycott To al Isrā'

Calling the Tribes to Islam during the Holy Months

The pact into which the clans of Quraysh had entered for boycotting Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and blockading the Muslims continued to be observed for three consecutive years. During this time Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his family and companions fortified themselves against attack in one of the hills within Makkah. In their isolation, however, they suffered all kinds of privations; often they could not find enough food to satisfy their hunger. It was not possible either for Muhammad (P.B.U.H) or the Muslims to mix with other people or to talk to them except during the holy months, when the Arabs would come to Makkah on pilgrimage and all hostilities would cease. In those months, no killing, persecution, aggression or vengence was permitted. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) used to approach the Arabs and call them unto the religion of Allah and warn them of His imminent punishment as well as announce to them the blessings of paradise. The pilgrims knew what Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had suffered in the cause of his mission, and this stirred their sympathy and compassion for him as well as their sensitivity to his call. Indeed, this boycott imposed by Quraysh, and

Muhammad's patient (P.B.U.H) bearing of it for the sake of his cause, won for him and his cause many hearts. Not all men were as hard of feeling as Abū Jahl and Abū Lahab.

Blockade of the Muslims

The long duration of the blockade and, consequently, the great sufferings inflicted upon the Muslims by the Quraysh, caused a number of Makkans to realize the hardness and injustice to which their very brethren, in-laws, and cousins, had been subjected. Were it not for the few who compassionately furnished the Muslims food, the latter would have surely starved. Hishām ibn 'Amr was the most compassionate to the Muslims in their tragedy. He used to load his camel with food and other supplies, take it during the night and pass by the entrance to the quarter where the Muslims were isolated. He would detach the reins of the camel and let it go free, whipping it on the sides so that the camel would enter into the quarter and be seized by the Muslims. The more Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his companions suffered, the more disturbed a number of Qurayshis became. Unable to withhold his compassion, Hishām ibn 'Amr went to Zuhayr ibn Abū Umayyah, whose mother was 'Atikah, daughter of 'Abd al Muttalib. He said, "0 Zuhayr, how could you eat and wear new clothes and marry and enjoy life when your uncles are locked up and isolated, unable to buy or purchase anything, to give or to take anyone in marriage? By God I swear that if the Muslims were the uncles of Abū al Hakam ibn Hishām and you had asked him to boycott them as he asked you to boycott the Muslims, he would have never fulfilled your request." Together the two men agreed to revoke the pact of the boycott and sought to convince others to do likewise, although secretly. Al Mut'am ibn 'Adiyy, Abū al Bakhtari ibn Hishām and Zam'ah ibn al Aswad agreed to denounce the pact of boycott and to work

together for its repudiation.

One day after circumambulating the Ka'bah seven times, Zuhayr ibn Abū Umayyah addressed the Makkans: "0 People of Makkah, would you that we eat food and enjoy ourselves while the Banū Häshim are dying one after another unable to buy or acquire anything? By God, I shall not sit still until this unjust pact of the boycott is revoked." Upon hearing this, Aba Jahl immediately rose and said to Zuhayr, "You are a liar. The pact is sacred and inviolable." At this, Zam'ah, Abū al Bakhtari, al Mut'am, as well as Hishām ibn 'Amr, rose fiom their places to argue against Aba Jahl and to confirm Zuhayr in his request. At this show of strength, Abū Jahl realized that a previous agreement must have been reached between these men and that direct opposition to them might not prove advantageous. He therefore withdrew. Al Mut'am rose to tear up the pact hanging on the wall of the Ka'bah only to find that insects had already devoured most of it except the opening words "In the name of Allah." At this, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his companions were permitted to come out of their isolation and circulate in Makkah, to buy and to sell as usual, although the antagonism and hostility remained as they were, and each party continued to look forward to a day when it could overcome the other.

In fallibility of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in Conveying the Revelation

Some biographers claimed that the unbelievers who brought about the revocation of the boycott pact went to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and asked him to make some gesture of reconciliation toward the Quraysh in order to strengthen them in their attempts and to put a stop to further harm. They asked him to agree to give their gods a place, at least to grant them occasional recognition with the fingers of his hand .as the Makkans were

accustomed to do. The same biographers claim that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) inclined toward doing some of this in gratitude for the good deeds just done to him. They even allege that he said to himself: "What blame is there if I do such a thing? Allah knows that I am innocent !" Other biographers report that the same men who helped revoke the pact of boycott went one evening to Muhammad (P.B.U.H), talked to him all night, and praised him so much and endeared themselves to him, calling him "Our Master, Our Master," until he was moved to answer some of their demands. The first version was reported by Sa'id ibn Jubayr; and the second by Qatadah. In both versions, it is reported that Allah protected Muhammad (P.B.U.H) against their subversion and Revealed to him (P.B.U.H) the following verse:

﴿ وَإِن كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُونَكَ عَنِ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِيَ عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَهُ وَإِذًا لَّاتَّخَذُوكَ خَلِيلًا ﴿٧٣﴾ وَلَوْلَا أَن ثَبَّتْنَاكَ لَقَدْ كِدتَّ تَرْكَنُ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا ﴿٧٤﴾ إِذًا لَّأَذَقْنَاكَ ضِعْفَ الْحَيَاةِ وَضِعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٧٥﴾ ﴾ سورة الإسراء الآيات ٧٣-٧٥

(And their purpose was to tempt you away from that which We had revealed unto you, to substitute in Our name something quite different: (in that case) behold! they would certainly have made you (their) friend! And had We not given you strength thou wouldst nearly have inclined to them a little. In that case We should have made you taste double portion (of punishment) in this life, and equal portion in death: and moreover you would have found none to help thee against Us!) (Al-Isra': 73-75)

It should be remembered that these verses were claimed to have been revealed in connection with the forged story of the goddesses which we have investigated earlier; the present reporters attribute it to the story of the revocation of the boycott pact. The same verses have also been claimed by ibn 'Abbās, as reported by 'Atā', to have been revealed in connection with another story. That is the story of the delegation of Thaqif who came to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to ask him to declare their valley holy just as Makkah had declared her trees and birds and animals holy. It is claimed that the Prophet (P.B.U.H) hesitated until these verses were revealed. Whatever the historical circumstances which occasioned the Revelation of these verses, the verses themselves bespeak the greatness of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as well as his candidness. The same aspects of Muhammad's personality (P.B.U.H) are equally in evidence in the verses we have reported from ***Sūrah*** 80. Indeed, they are supported by the history of Muhammad's life (P.B.U.H) as a whole. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had repeatedly told the people that he was only a man, that as a man Allah had revealed to him certain messages for their guidance, and that without Allah's special protection in this regard he was as fallible as anyone. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) did in fact err when he frowned in the face of ibn Umm MaktUm and sent him away. He almost erred as reported above in the verses from the ***surah*** "al Isrā'" as well as in the foregoing verses which tell of his inclination away from that which had been revealed to him and of the people's invitation to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to invent a revelation. But revelation did, in fact, come to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and condemned what he did in connection with the blind beggar, his near succumbing to Quraysh's temptation. Muhammad (P.B.U.H), however, reported all these Revelations to the Quraysh people with equal truthfulness and candidness. Neither self-esteem nor pride nor any other human feeling prevented him from conveying the Revelation, whether it was for or against

him. The truth and the truth alone was the essence of his message. He declared the truth even if it were against himself. We are accustomed to expect the great man to bear resolutely and patiently whatever harm he might be exposed to on account of his conviction, but we hardly ever expect the great man to acknowledge that he almost succumbed to his temptations. Such temptations are usually not talked about, and most great men are contented to reckon with themselves strongly only in secret. He was therefore greater than the great, for his soul enabled him to rise to the height where it would acknowledge the truth even regarding its own struggle and proclaim it to the public. Such greatness that is greater than the great belongs exclusively to the prophets. It demands of the prophet (P.B.U.H) the very utmost in truthfulness and candidness in the conveyance of the message of truth that comes from Allah alone.

Death of A bū Tālib and Khadijah

After the repudiation of the boycott pact, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his companions emerged from their quarters. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) immediately resumed his call to the Quraysh and to the tribes that used to come to Makkah during the holy months. Despite the spreading of his fame among the Arab tribes and the number of his followers, neither he nor they were quite yet safe from injury, and nothing he could do would have guaranteed such safety. A few months later two tragedies were to add to his troubles. First, the death of Abū Tālib, his protector, and then that of Khadijah, his wife. Abū Tālib died at about the age of eighty. When Quraysh knew of his approaching end, they feared that the conflict with the Muslims would reach a new height now that their leadership would pass into the less temperate hands of Hamzah and 'Umar, well known for their hardness and determined hostility. The leaders of Quraysh went

up to Abū Tālib and addressed him as he lay on his deathbed:

"0 Abū Tālib, we hold for you great respect and we appreciate your counsel and wisdom. Now that you are about to leave us, and, knowing the conflict that has arisen between us and your nephew, do please call him and ask him to give us assurance as we are wont to give you for him, that he will leave us alone and we will leave him alone, that he will leave us to practice our religion and we shall leave him to practice his." Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his companions came to the meeting in his uncle's house. After he was told about their purpose he said:

"Yes, indeed! All I want from you is this one word of assurance which, if given, will bring you mastery of all Arabia as well as Persia, namely . . ." "Speak out," interrupted Abū Jahl, "by your father we shall give it to you! Not one word but ten." Muhammad (P.B.U.H) continued: "Namely, that you witness with me that there is no God but Allah and repudiate all that you worship besides Him." Some of them said to Muhammad (P.B.U.H): "Do you want to make all the gods one?" Turning to one another, the men of Quraysh said: "By God, this man is not going to give you any word of assurance such as you require." The leaders of Quraysh left Abū Tālib's house without satisfaction, and Abū Tālib died a few days later, the situation between him and the Quraysh being more hostile than ever before.

Later on, Khadijah, who supported Muhammad (P.B.U.H) with her love and goodness, her purity, gentleness and strong faith, passed away. At her death, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) lost an angel of mercy who reassured and reconciled him whenever he felt crushed under the burdens of his cause. Henceforth, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was forever to miss the believing eyes of Khadijah and her reassuring smile, just as he had lost in Abū Talib his protection and refuge from his enemies. How deeply these tragedies must have cut into Muhammad's heart

(P.B.U.H)! Surely they were strong enough to shake the most determined soul, to bring doubt and despair to the most resolute, and to leave behind the greatest degree of emptiness and despondence.

Increase of Quraysh's Hostility

Soon thereafter, the Quraysh were to increase their attacks against Muhammad (P.B.U.H). An example of the least of such injuries was the covering of Muhammad's head (P.B.U.H) with soil thrown at him by one of the plebeians of Quraysh. Muhammad (P..U.H) withdrew to his home where his daughter, Fātimah, moved to tears by the sight of her father, washed his head for him. It is certainly painful to us to hear our children cry, and more so to hear our daughters cry. Indeed, every tear dropped from a daughter's eye is a ball of fire fallen upon our hearts, causing us to cry in pain. The daughter's sob and painful murmur fall heavily upon the father's heart, and Fātimah's cries must have choked a compassionate father such as Muhammad (P.B.U.H). However, what was he to do to reassure a person who had just lost her mother and who is now appalled by the insults heaped upon her father? Nothing but to orient himself all the more to Allah, and to proclaim his conviction that Allah would give him final victory. He said to his daughter: "Do not cry, 0 Fātimah! Your father has God for protector." Often Muhammad (P.B.U.H) would be heard saying: "By Allah. Quraysh never harmed me so much as after the death of Abū Tālib."

Muhammad's Excursion (P.B.U.H) to Tā'if **(628 C.E.)**

The Quraysh doubled and redoubled their injuries to Muhummad (P.B.U.H) and his followers until Muhammad

(P.B.U.H) could bear it no longer. Alone, and without telling anyone, he undertook a trip to the city of Tā'if where he solicited the support of the tribe of Thaqif after calling them to Islam. When they refused he asked them not to spread the news of their refusal to his enemies that they might not rejoice at his failure. The tribe of Thaqif, however, not only repudiated Muhammad's call (P.B.U.H) but sent their servants to insult him and throw him out of their city. He ran away from them and took shelter near a wall which belonged to 'Utbah and Shaybah, Sons of Rabi'ah. There, he sat under a vine pondering his defeat, within sight of the sons of Rabi'ah. He raised his hands to heaven and prayed with noticeable pain:

"0 Allah, please consider my weakness, my shortage of means, and the little esteem that people have of me. Oh, most Merciful Allah, You are the Lord of the oppressed, and You are my Lord. To whom would You leave my fate? To a stranger who insults me? Or to an enemy who dominates me? Would I that You have no wrath against me! Your pleasure alone is my objective. Under the light of Your faith which illuminates all darkness and on which this world and the other depend, I take my refuge. I pray that I may not become the object of Your wrath and anger. To You alone belongs the right to blame and to chastise until Your pleasure is met. There is neither power nor strength except in You."

'Addās, the Christian

For some time, the sons of Rabi'ah watched Muhammad (P.B.U.H) until a feeling of compassion and sympathy for him began to stir within them. They sent their christian servant, 'Addās by name, with a hunch of grapes. Before Muhammad (P.B.U.H) partook of the grapes, he said: "In the name of Allah." 'Addās was surprised and said. "That is not what the natives of

this country usually say." Muhammad (P.B.U.H) then asked him about his religion and his country of origin, and when he learned that he was a Christian from Nineveh, he said, "Are you then from the City of the Righteous .Jonah, son of Mathew?" Still more surprised, 'Addās asked, "What do you know about Jonah, son of Matthew?" Muhammad (P.B.U.H) answered, "That was my brother; he was a true prophet and so am I.', Moved with emotion, 'Addās covered Muhammad (P.B.U.H) with kisses. The two sons of Rahi'ah were surprised at what they saw although they remained unmoved by Muhammad's religious (P.B.U.H) claims. When their servant returned to them they counseled him: "0 'Addās, do not allow this man to convert you from your faith. Your faith is better for you than his."

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) Offers Himself to the Tribes

The news of the injuries inflicted upon Muhammad (P.B.U.H) lightened the hostility of the tribe of Thaqif, but it never succeeded in moving them to follow him. The Quraysh knew about this expedition and increased their injuries. Nothing, however, could dissuade Muhammad (P.B.U.H) from continuing his call. At every season, whenever the tribes of Arabia came to Makkah, he offered himself and his cause to them, informed them that he was a commissioned prophet (P.B.U.H), and asked them to believe in him. His uncle 'Abd al 'Uzzā, son of 'Abd al Muttalib, otherwise known as Abū Lahab, would not let him; he would follow Muhammad (P.B.U.H) everywhere he went to dissuade the people from listening to him. Muhammad (P.B.U.H), for his part, did not only preach his religion to the tribes in the pilgrimage season in Makkah, but sought those tribes in their own quarters. He visited the tribe of Kindah and the tribe of Kalb, of Banū Hanifah, Banū 'Amir ibn Sa'sa'ah, each in its own province. None of them responded favorably to

him, and they all repudiated his call—sometimes with insults, as did the tribe of Banū Hanifah. The tribe of Banū 'Amir felt more ambitious and imagined that they could assume a position of leadership should the cause of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) triumph. But when Muhammad (P.B.U.H) told them, "The matter belongs wholly to Allah; He places leadership wheresoever He wishes," they turned away and repudiated his call like the rest.

Did all these tribes repudiate Muhammad's call (P.B.U.H) for the same reasons for which Quraysh did before them? We have seen the disappointment of the tribe of Banū 'Amir upon the frustration of their ambition of leadership and power. As for the tribe of Thaqif, they had a different opinion. In addition to the cool atmosphere and vineyards which made it a summer resort, the city of Tā'if was the center of worship of al Lāt, for it was in its midst that the idol stood and on its account the city had become a place of pilgrimage. Should the tribe of Thaqif follow Muhammad (P.B.U.H), the goddess al Lāt would lose her place of worship, the city its pilgrimage site, and ensuing hostility with Quraysh would soon cut off all summer visits by the Makkans. Every tribe had thus its own reason, economic or other, for which it refused to accept Islam besides the personal attachment to the religion of the fathers and the worship of old idols.

Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) Engagement to 'A'ishah

The rejection of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) by the tribes increased his isolation, as the doubled and redoubled injuries of the Quraysh increased Muhammad's pain and grief (P.B.U.H). The period of mourning for Khadijah passed, and Muhammad (P.B.U.H) thought of marrying again in the hope of finding consolation in a new companion. He also thought that marriage might even furnish a new occasion for strengthening the bond of brotherhood and commitment between himself and the earlier

converts to Islam. He therefore asked u, but the marriage was postponed for three more years until 'A'ishah reached the age of eleven. In the meantime, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) married Sawdah, the widow of one of the Muslim companions who emigrated to Abysinnia but died upon his return to Makkah. In both these instances, it is hoped that the reader will have a glimpse of the principle regulating Muhammad's later (P.B.U.H) domestic life which we shall discuss in a forthcoming chapter.

Al Isrā' (621 C.E.)

It was during this period that ***at Isra'*** and ***al Mi'rāj*** had taken place. On the night of at ***Isrā'.*** Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was staying in the house of his cousin, Hind, daughter of Abū Tālib, who was also called Umm Hāni'. Hind related that "The Prophet of Allah spent the night in my quarters. He recited his night prayers and went to sleep. Just before dawn, the Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H) awoke us and we all prayed the dawn prayer together. When the prayer was through, he said, "0 Umm Hāni'. I prayed with you the night prayer in this place; then I went to Jerusalem and I prayed there, and as you see, I have just finished praying with you the dawn prayer.' I answered, '0 Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H), do not tell this to the people for they will belie you and harm you.' He said, 'By Allah I shall tell them.'"

Was al Isrā' in Body or ***in Soul?***

Those who claim that ***al Isrā'*** and ***al Mi'raj*** of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had taken place in soul rather than in body refer to this report of Umm Hāni'. They also refer to another report by 'A'ishah which says, "The body of the Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H) was never missed from his bed. Rather, Allah caused

him to travel in soul alone." Whenever Mu'āwiyah ibn Abu Sufyān was asked about ***al Isrā'*** of the Prophet (P.B.U.H), he used to answer, "It was a true vision from Allah." Those who share such a view confirm their claim with the Qur'ānic verse,

﴿ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا ٱلرُّءْيَا ٱلَّتِىٓ أَرَيْنَـٰكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلنَّاسِ ﴾

سورة الإسراء آية ٦٠

(We granted the Vision which We showed you, but as a trial for men) (Al-Isra': 60)

According to the other view, ***al Isrā'*** from Makkah to Jerusalem took place in body. In confirmation of this, they mention that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had related what he saw in the desert on the way hither and add that his ascension to heaven was in soul. Others hold that both ***al Isra'*** and ***al Mi'raj*** were in body. As a result of this great controversy, thousands of books have been written on the subject. We have a view of this matter which we shall give shortly, a view that somebody else may have held before us. Before we proceed, however, we shall give the story of al ***Isrd'*** and at ***Mi'raj*** as it was reported in the biography books.

Al Isrā' as Given in biography books

The Orientalist Dermenghem has reported the following eloquent story culled from a number of biography books. We shall quote it as he related it:

"In the middle of a solemn, quiet night when even the night-birds and the rambling beasts were quiet, when the streams had stopped murmuring and no breezes played, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was awakened by a voice crying: O'Sleeper, awake!' And before

him stood the Angel Gabriel with radiant forehead, countenance white as snow, blond hair floating, in garments sewn with pearls and embroidered in gold. Manifold wings of every colour stood out quivering from his body.

"He led a fantastical steed, Boraq ('Lightning'), with a human head and two eagles' wings; it approached Mahomet (P.B.U.H) allowed him to mount and was off like an arrow over the mountains of Mecca and the sands of the desert toward the North . . . The Angel accompanied them on this prodigious flight. On the summit of Mt. Sinai, where Allah had spoken to Moses, Gabriel stopped Muhammad (P.B.U.H) for prayer, and again at Bethlehem where Jesus was born, before resuming their course in the air. Mysterious voices attempted to detain the Prophet (P.B.U.H), who was so wrapped up in his mission that he felt Allal alone had the right to stop his steed. When they reached Jerusalem Muhammad (P.B.U.H) tethered Boraq and prayed on the ruins of the Temple of Solomon with Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. Seeing an endless ladder appear upon Jacob's rock, the Prophet (P.B.U.H) was enabled to mount rapidly to the heavens.

"The first heaven was of pure silver and the stars suspended from its vault by chains of gold; in each one an angel lay awake to prevent the demons from climbing into the holy dwelling places and the spirits from listening indiscreetly to celestial secrets. There, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) greeted Adam. And in the six other heavens the Prophet (P.B.U.H) met Noah, Aaron, Moses, Abraham, David, Solomon, Idris (Enoch), Yahya (John the Baptist) and Jesus. He saw the Angel of Death, Azrail, so huge that his eyes were separated by 70,000 marching days. He commanded 100,000 battalions and passed his time in writing in an immense book the names of those dying or being born. He saw the Angel of Tears who wept for the sins of the world; the Angel of Vengeance with brazen face, covered with warts, who presides over the elements of fire and sits on a throne of flames;

and another immense angel made up half of snow and half of fire surrounded by a heavenly choir continually crying: '0 God, Thou hast united snow and fire, united all Thy servants in obedience to Thy Laws.' In the seventh heaven where the souls of the just resided was an angel larger than the entire world, with 70,000 heads; each head had 70,000 mouths, each mouth had 70,000 tongues and each tongue spoke in 70,000 different idioms singing endlessly the praises of the Most High.

"While contemplating this extraordinary being, Mahomet (P.B.U.H) was carried to the top of the Lote-Tree of Heaven flowering at the right of Allah's invisible throne and shading myriads of angelic spirits. Then after having crossed in a twinkling of an eye the widest seas, regions of dazzling light and deepest darkness, traversed millions of clouds of hyacinths, of gauze, of shadows, of fire, of air, of water, of void, each one separated by 500 marching years, he then passed more clouds—of beauty, of perfection, of supremacy, of immensity, of unity, behind which were 70,000 choirs of angels bowed down and motionless in complete silence. The earth began to heave and he felt himself carried into the light of his Lord, where he was transfixed, paralysed. From here heaven and earth together appeared as if imperceptible to him, as if melted into nothingness and reduced to the size of a grain of mustard-seed in the middle of a field. And this is how Muhammad (P.B.U.H) admits having been before the Throne of the Lord of the World.

"He was in the presence of the Throne 'at a ***distance of two bows' length or yet nearer'*** beholding Allah with his soul's eyes and seeing things which the tongue cannot express, surpassing all human understanding. The Almighty placed one hand on Muhammad's breast (P.B.U.H) and the other on his shoulder—to the very marrow of his bones he felt an icy chill, followed by an inexpressible feeling of calm and ecstatic annihilation.

"After a conversation whose ineffability is not honored by too precise tradition, the Prophet (P.B.U.H) received the

command from Allah that all believers must say fifty prayers each day. Upon coming down from heaven Muhammad (P.B.U.H) met Moses, who spoke with him on this subject:

"'How do you hope to make your followers say fifty prayers each day? I had experience with mankind before you. I tried everything with the children of Israel that it was possible to try. Take my word, return to our Lord and ask for a reduction.'

"Muhammad (P.B.U.H) returned, and the number of prayers was reduced to forty. Moses thought that this was still too many and made his successor go back to Allah a number of times. In the end Allah exacted not more than five prayers.

"Gabriel then took the Prophet (P.B.U.H) to paradise where the faithful rejoice after their resurrection—an immense garden with silver soil, gravel of pearls, mountains of amber, filled with golden palaces and precious stones.

"Finally, after returning by the luminous ladder to the earth, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) untethered Boraq, mounted the saddle and rode into Jerusalem on the winged steed."

Ibn Hishām's Report about al Isrā'

Such is the report of the orientalist Dermenghem concerning the story of al ***Isra'*** and al ***Mi'raj.*** Every item he reported may be readily found, perhaps with greater or lesser detail, in many of the biographies. An example of the fertility of the reporters' imagination may be read in ibn Hishām's biography. Reporting on Muhammad's conversation (P.B.U.H) with Adam in the first heaven, ibn Hishām wrote: "Then I saw men with lips like those of camels. In their hands were balls of fire which they thrusted into their mouths and collected from their extremities to thrust into their mouths again. I asked, 'Who are these, 0 Gabriel?' He said: 'These are men who robbed the orphans.' I then saw men with large bellies, the likes of which I have never seen before

even on the road to the house of Pharaoh where the greatest punishment is meted out to the greatest -sinners. These are trodden upon by men who when brought to the fire run like maddened camels. Those whom they tread upon remain immobile, unable to move from their place. I asked, 'Who are those, 0 Gabriel?' He answered, 'Those are the usurers.' I then saw men sitting at a table loaded with delicious and fat meat as well as spoilt and stinking meat. They were eating of the latter and leaving the former untouched. I asked, 'Who are these, 0 Gabriel?' He answered, 'These are men who left their own women whom Allah had permitted them to enjoy and ran after other women illegitimately.' I then saw women hanging from their breasts and asked, 'Who are these, 0 Gabriel?' He answered, 'These are women who fathered on their husbands children not their own.' He then took me into Paradise where I saw a beautiful damsel with luscious lips. As I was attracted by her I asked her, 'To whom do you belong?' She answered: 'To Zayd ibn Hārithah.' The prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H) announced this glad tiding to Zayd ibn Harithah."

Whether in ibn Hisham's or in other biographies of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) or in the books of Qur'änic exegesis, the reader will find many details besides the above-mentioned. It is certainly the historian's right to question how closely these reports have been scrutinized and investigated by their collectors, with the view to finding out how much of them may be truly ascribed to the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and how much was the invention of the fancy of the Sūfis and others. Although there is no room here to undertake such investigation, nor to decide the issue of whether or not al ***Isrā'*** or ***al Miv'raj*** were both in body or in soul or the one in body and the other in soul, there is still no doubt that every one of these views has reasons which their advocates claim to be legitimate. There is no a priori reason why one may not adhere to one of these views rather than another.

Whoever wishes to hold the view that ***al Is'ra*** and ***al Mi'raj*** were in soul and not in body, could turn to the evidence of the reports we have already cited as well as to the Qur'änic emphasis that:

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّمَآ أَنَا۠ بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰٓ إِلَىَّ أَنَّمَآ إِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَٰحِدٌ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا۟ لِقَآءَ رَبِّهِۦ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَٰلِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِۦٓ أَحَدًۢا ﴿١١٠﴾ ﴾ سورة الكهف آية ١١٠

(Say: "I am but a man like yourselves, (but) the inspiration has come to me, that your God is one God: whoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work righteousness, and, in the worship of his Lord, admit no one as partner.) (Al-Kahf: 110)

Whoever holds a view of ***al Isrā*** and at ***Mi'raj*** such as this is perhaps better entitled to inquire about the meaning of these ideas. And that is precisely the issue to which, perhaps for the first time ever, we want to address ourselves in the following sections.

Al Isrā' and the Unity of Being

As phenomena in the spiritual life of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), al *Is'rā'* and at *Mi'rāj* carry great and noble meanings that are greater than the foregoing descriptions have suggested—much of which being the product of pure imagination. In the moment of *al Jsra'* and al *Mi'raj,* Muhammad (P.B.U.H) grasped the unity of being in all its totality and perfection. In that moment, neither space nor time could prevent his consciousness from encompassing all being; whereas our consciousness, determined

by weaker perceptive and rational faculties, is incapable of transcending the limitations of space and time. In that moment, all frontiers fell before Muhammad's insight (P.B.U.H); and all being was, as it were, gathered in his soul. In that moment, he came to know totality from beginning to end and represented this totality as the self-realization of the forces of goodness, truth, and beauty in their struggle against and conquest of evil, untruth, and fraud. All this happened to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) by Allah's grace.

No one is capable of such transcendent vision except by means of superhuman power. If any of the followers of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) were unable to match him in his struggle to rise to or to achieve such vision and perception, there should be neither blame nor surprise. Men's degrees of endowment differ, and their vision of the truth is always determined by these limitations which our ordinary powers are unable to transcend. There is perhaps an analogy between Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) understanding of the universe at that moment and that of any other person who has risen to the highest level of consciousness possible for man. It is that of the story of the blind men who, upon being brought into contact with the elephant, were asked to identify it. It will be remembered that the first thought it was a long rope because he had touched its tail; the second, a thick tree because he had touched its leg; the third, a spear because he had touched its ivory; and the fourth, a moving round tube because he had touched its trunk. These views are to the unimpaired view of the elephant as the understanding of most of us to that of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), implied in ***al Isrā'*** and al ***Mi'raj,*** of the unity and totality of being. In Muhammad's vision (P.B.U.H), the finitude of space and time disappeared, and he beheld the universe all "gathered up" and present. Men capable of such great moments of consciousness see the details of space-time and problems of worldly living as mathematical atoms appended to the person without ever affecting him. None of them affect in the

least the life of his body, the beat of his heart, the illumination of his soul, the enlightenment of his consciousness, nor his vibration with energy and life. For by existing, such a person enters into communion with all existence and all life, as it were, ***ipso facto.***

A spiritual ***Isra'*** and ***Mi'raj*** cannot be different in its meanings of beauty, majesty, and transcendence than a bodily one. In itself, the story is a very strong figurization of the spiritual unity of all being. Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) detour for a stop on Mount Sinai where Allah spoke to Moses face to face, at Bethlehem where Jesus was born, and the spiritual meeting of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), Jesus, Moses and Abraham in the moment of prayer is another very strong figurization of the unity of religious experience and life, a unity constitutive of the world as it tends to value and perfection.

Al Isrā' and Modern Science

In our modern age, science confirms the possibility of a spiritual ***Isrā'*** and ***Mi'rāj.*** Where there is a meeting of genuine forces, that which shines forth is genuine reality; just as a meeting of the same forces of nature configured by the genius of Marconi. produced the real effect of lighting a light in distant Australia by means of an electric radiation directed at it on the waves of space from his ship in Venice. In this age of ours, science has confirmed the possibility of prestidigitation, of broadcast of sound through space by means of the radio, as well as of pictures and writing, all of which was considered too fanciful even for the imagination. The forces latent in nature are still being discovered by science, and every new day brings a new surprise. Strong and powerful spirits such as Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) are perfectly capable of being carried in one night from Makkah to Jerusalem and of being shown Allah's signs.

That is not opposed to reason, especially when the moral of it is the figurization of Divine truths, of extraordinary meanings of beauty and transcendence, and of the unity of spirit and world so clearly achieved in the consciousness of Muhammad (P.B.U.H). Though extraordinary and unique to Muhammad (P.B.U.H), the experience is certainly possible for man upon removal of the illusions of this world, penetration of ultimate reality, and relation of oneself and the world thereto.

Doubt of Quraysh and Apostasy of Some Muslims

The Arabs of Makkah, however, were incapable of understanding such meanings. Therefore, as soon as Muhammad (P.B.U.H) related his ***Isrā'***, they could not progress beyond the question of the possibility or otherwise of instantaneous bodily transportation to Jerusalem. Even those who followed Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and believed in him were troubled by doubt. Some said, "This is clear and decisive. By Allah, camels run continually for a whole month to reach al Sham and another whole month to return. Would Muhammad (P.B.U.H) achieve such a feat in one night ?" Many of the Muslims apostatized. Those who were troubled by doubt went to Abu Bakr and related to him Muhammad's claim (P.B.U.H). Abū Bakr answered, "Surely you are telling me lies." They said, "There is Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in the mosque telling the people of his trip." Abu Bakr answered, "By Allah, if Muhammad himself (P.B.U.H) has said so, then it is true. He tells us that the word of Allah comes to him directly from heaven to earth in an hour of night or day and we believe him. Isn't this a greater miracle than what you are doubting today ?" Abu Bakr came to the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and listened to him describing Jerusalem and its mosque. When he finished, Abū Bakr said, "You said the truth, 0 Prophet of Allah. (P.B.U.H)" From that day on Muhammad

(P.B.U.H) called Abū Bakr "al ***Siddiq.***"

Al Isrā' in Body

Those who claim that al ***Isrā'*** took place in body explain, in support of their view, that when the Prophet (P.B.U.H) proclaimed the news, Muslims and non-Muslims asked him for proof. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) described to them a caravan of camels he had encountered on the road to Jerusalem. He related how he led the leaders of that caravan to one of their beasts which had gone astray in the desert, how he drank from a water jar carried on the back of one of those camels, and how he lowered the lid of the jar after he drank from it. They related that the Quraysh had inquired about that caravan and that the reports of the caravan leaders confirmed Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) claim and description. On the other hand, those who believe that al ***Isrā'*** took place in spirit do not find such reports unbelievable now that science in our own days has confirmed the possibility of hypnotism and of the hypnotized one to report about events far removed from him. For a spirit holding in unity and presence the spiritual life of the universe *in toto,* for one so endowed with vision and power so as to penetrate the secret of all life from eternity to eternity, such a feat is not at all surprising

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The Two Covenants of al 'Aqabah

Muslim Weakness after the Isrā'

Quraysh did not understand the meanings behind ***al Isrd'.*** Neither did many of the Muslims who themselves apostatized in consequence, as we saw earlier. Encouraged by this relapse, Quraysh intensified its attacks against Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his followers until they could cope with it no more. Muhammad's hope (P.B.U.H) of enlisting the tribes into his ranks was dissipated after his rejection by Thaqif at al Tā'if, as well as by the tribes of Kindah, Kalb, Banū 'Amir and Banū Hanifah at their annual pilgrimage in Makkah. After all these experiences, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) nearly gave up hope of converting any more men from Quraysh. Realizing the isolation imposed upon Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and the irreconcilable opposition of Quraysh to his cause, the other tribes of the Peninsula, especially those surrounding or having business relations with Makkah, became all the more reluctant to receive his calls. Despite his reliance upon Hamzah and 'Umar, and his confidence that Quraysh could not harm him any more than they had already done on account of the tribal loyalties and alliances involved, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) realized that the spread of Allah's call, limited as it were to a small number of weak people,

exposed to the danger of apostasy or extermination, had come to a halt unless some victory from Allah was forthcoming. Days passed while Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) increasing isolation kept pace with Quraysh's ever-growing enmity.

Muhammad's Fastness

Did this isolation of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) weaken his determination or impair his morale? No! Rather, it strengthened his faith in the truth which had come to him from his Lord. Such travails would have discouraged any person of ordinary spirit; but the noble, the truly gifted, they can only be stimulated to higher levels of conviction, of resolution, and self-exertion. Rather than being shaken, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his companions continued to have the strongest faith that Allah would raise His religion above all religions and bring victory to them in the process. The storms of hatred raging around them did not shake the faith. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) spent his year in Makkah unconcerned that his and Khadijah's wealth was being rapidly exhausted to the point that poverty and want were imminent. Only the victory which he was absolutely certain Allah soon would grant him occupied his thought. When the season of pilgrimage came again and men from all over the Arabian Peninsula gathered in Makkah, he renewed his call to the revealed truth, undaunted by any violent rejection with which these tribes might meet his call. The plebeians of Makkah renewed their attacks against his person whenever he preached in public, but their injuries did not reduce Muhammad's self assurance (P.B.U.H). He knew that it was Almighty God who sent him a messenger of the truth, that there could be no doubt but that Allah would confirm His truth and give it victory. He knew that Allah had asked him (P.B.U.H) always to present his Revelations to men with arguments yet more sound and gentle,

﴿ فَإِذَا ٱلَّذِى بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُۥ عَدَٰوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُۥ وَلِىٌّ حَمِيمٌ ﴾

سورة فصلت آية ٣٤

(Then will he between whom and you was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate) (Fussilat: 34)

He knew too well that Allah has asked him to be gentle to men that they might remember and fear. It was in this certainty, therefore, that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) received the attacks of the Quraysh and bore patiently their injuries and harm. All along,

﴿ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ مَعَ ٱلصَّـٰبِرِينَ ﴾ سورة البقرة آية ١٥٣

(For Allah is with those who patiently persevere.)
(Al-Baqarah: 153)

The First Signs of Victory in Yathrib

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) did not have to wait more than a few years before the first signs of victory began to loom on the horizon, in the direction of Yathrib. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was related to Yathrib in ways other than trade. He had relatives in Yathrib. Moreover, in Yathrib was his father's grave. In Yathrib lived Banū al Najjār, uncle of his ancestor 'Abd al Muttalib, and hence his relative. To that grave, Aminah, the loyal wife, as well as 'Abd al Muttalib, the father who lost his son at the very height of his youth and power used to come for yearly visits. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) himself accompanied his mother to Yathrib when he was six years old and visited his father's grave with her. On their way back to Makkah, his mother, Aminah, fell ill and died and was buried at al Abwā' midway between Yathrib

and Makkah. It was no surprise to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) that the first sign of victory came from a town to which he was so closely associated, a town which stood in the direction of al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, toward which he prayed and where stood the shrines of his two predecessors, Moses and Jesus. No wonder that circumstances prepared the town of Yathrib for this great destiny that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) might achieve victory therein and that it might become the capital from which Islam was to conquer and to spread over the world.

Al Aws, al Khazraj, and the Jews

For this illustrious career, the town of Yathrib was better fitted than any other. Both al Aws and al Khazraj were idolaters sharing their town with the Jews whom they hated and often fought, and were hated and fought by them. History relates that the Christians of al Sham who then belonged to the dominant church in the East Roman Empire hated the Jews very strongly, regarding them as the crucifiers and torturers of Jesus. These Christians had raided Yathrib in the past for the express purpose of killing its Jewish citizens. When they could not succeed, they sought the assistance of al Aws and al Khazraj in order to draw the Jews of Madinah into their trap. Such a plan was responsible for the death of many a Jew and deprived the Jewish community of its dominion and power within the city. It also raised al Aws and al Khazraj to a position of power greater than that which trade relations with the Byzantines had hitherto established for them. History further relates that once more the Madinese tried to destroy Jewish power in their city in order to extend their possessions and influence, and that they had succeeded. The surviving Jews hated al Aws and al Khazraj deeply. Enmity was hence deeply rooted in the hearts of both. However, the followers of Moses were quick to realize that they neither had

the power nor the numbers needed to meet force with force, and that continuation of such adventures would in the end result in their own extermination should al Aws and al Khazraj ever find allies among their own coreligionists in Arabia. Hence they changed their tactics and, instead of victory in battle, they sought to divide and separate al Aws from al Kharzaj and cause the two tribes to hate and fight each other. In this they succeeded far better, for the two tribes were soon at each other's throats. Through the continuing hostility of the two Arab tribes, the Jews secured their position, increased their trade and wealth, and re-established the dominion, possession, and prestige which they had once enjoyed.

The Jews' Spiritual Influences

Besides this competition for power and dominion, there is a sphere in which the Jews exerted greater influence upon al Aws and al Khazraj than they had over any other tribe of Arabia. That is the realm of the spirit. As adherents of a monotheistic faith, the Jews had been castigating their idolatrous neighbors for worshipping at the feet of idols which they took to be intercessors for them with Allah. The Jews had been threatening them with the prediction that soon a prophet (P.B.U.H) would arise among the Arabs who would destroy them and ally himself to the Jews. Nonetheless, they did not succeed in judaizing the Arabs for two reasons: the first was that perpetual enmity between Christianity and Judaism did not allow the Jews to entertain any hope of political dominion in Yathrib. To realize for themselves a measure of security and prosperity through trade was the highest desideratum to which they would aspire. The second was that the Jews had thought of themselves as Allah's chosen people and objected that any other people might share with them such favored position. They do not missionarize their

faith, for they do not wish for it to include other than their own people, the children of Israel. This notwithstanding, neighborliness and trade between Arab and Jew enabled al Aws and al Khazraj to become more familiar with and more prepared for spiritual and religious discussion than other tribes. The evidence of this preparation is in the fact that nowhere had the Arabs responded to Muhammad's spiritual call (P.B.U.H) with the same understanding and enthusiasm.

Suwayd ibn at Sāmit

Suwayd ibn al Sāmit was one of the noblest men of Yathrib. His people called him "the perfect" for his bravery, his eloquent poetry, his great honor, and his noble lineage. During this period Suwayd, who came to Makkah for pilgrimage, was approached by Muhammad (P.B.U.H), who called him unto Allah and Islam. Suwayd said, "Perhaps what you have, Muhammad (P.B.U.H), is like that which I have." Muhammad (P.B.U.H) answered, "What is it that you have?" He answered, "The wisdom of Luqmān." Muhammad (P.B.U.H) asked him to explain this wisdom, and after hearing him, he said: "Your words are good, but those which I have are even better. For they are a Qur'an revealed by Allah to me as light and guidance." He read to him the Qur'ān and called him to Islam. Suwayd was pleased with what he heard, and said: "That is indeed good." When he left Muhammad (P.B.U.H), he was in deep thought; there are reports that when al Khazraj killed him he had already become a Muslim.

Iyās ibn Mu'ādh

Suwayd ibn al Sāmit was not the only example of the spiritual influence of the Jews upon the Arabs of Yathrib. The

Jews had not only instigated the enmity of al Aws for al Khazraj and vice versa, but fanned its flames as well. This enmity caused each of the two hostile tribes to seek alliances with other tribes to consolidate its power. It was in search of an alliance from the Quraysh against al Khazraj that Abū al Haysar Anas ibn Rāfi' came to Makkah with a number of men from Banū 'Abd al Ashhal, including Iyās ibn Mu'ādh. After Muhammad (P.B.U.H) heard of their arrival, he visited with them for a while, calling them unto Islam and reading to them the Qur'ān. When he fi iished, Iyās ibn Mu'ādh, still young and of tender age, rose and said:

"0 my people, this is by Allah far better than your religion." The delegation returned to Yathrib with one convert to Islam, namely Iyas. Apparently, they were too busy to listen attentively to Muhammad's preaching (P.B.U.H) and too preoccupied with their war preparations. Upon the return of Abū al Haysar and his delegation from Makkah, al Aws engaged them in the war of Bu'āth where both parties suffered grave losses. Nonetheless, the words of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) left such a deep impression upon them that both al Aws and al Khazraj came to see in Muhammad a prophet, a messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H), and a worthy spiritual leader.

The Battle of Bu'āth

Al Aws fought the battle of Bu'āth against al Khazraj in which both tribes gave full vent to their chronic enmity and hostility. So fierce did the battle rage that each party was seriously considering exterminating the enemy and finishing with the affair once arid for all if it could only achieve victory. Abu Usayd was the general not only of the legions of al Aws but of their hate and resentment as well. In the first round of battle, al Aws lost and they ran toward the desert for their lives. Al

Khazraj, who accused them of cowardice, began to sing in verse of their unmanliness and poltroonery. When Abū Usayd heard this, he plunged his own spear in his leg, fell from his horse and shouted, "Woe! Woe! By Allah I shall not move from this spot until they kill me. If you my people must forsake me, go ahead and run." Moved by this sacrifice of their own leader, al Aws returned to the battle with such enthusiasm and resoluteness—indeed despair—that they inflicted a terrible defeat upon al Khazraj. Pressing forth against their enemy, they burnt their houses as well as their orchards until stopped by Sa'd ibn Mu'ādh al Ashhali. Indeed Abū Usayd had intended to wipe out the Khazraj tribe completely, house by house, tree by tree, and person by person, until not one of them remained alive. Abū Qays ibn al Aslat, however, stood in his way and begged him to save al Khazraj saying, "They are your coreligionists; it would still behoove you to keep them alive. They would be better neighbors for you than the foxes and beasts of prey of the desert."

Islām Begins in Yathrib

After that day, the Jews recaptured their position of dominance in Yathrib. Both conqueror and vanquished realized the tragedy of what they had done, and they pondered their fate with gravity. Together they looked forward toward appointing a king to manage their affairs, a choice to fall upon 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad, of the vanquished al Khazraj, on account of his wisdom and sound opinions. The situation, evolved too rapidly, however, to allow a realization of this dream. A group of al Khazraj made a pilgrimage to Makkah where, they were met by Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and asked about their affairs. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) knew they were clients of the Jews. In order to keep their clients in check, the Jews used to threaten them that a new

prophet (P.B.U.H) was about to appear whom they would follow and bring to any of their enemies that dared oppose them the total destruction which was meted out to the ancient tribes of 'Ad and Iram. When the Prophet (P.B.U.H) talked to this group and called them unto Allah, they looked to one another arid said, "By Allah, this is the Prophet (P.B.U.H) by whom the Jews had threatened us. Let us acclaim him before they do." They responded favorably to Muhammad's call (P.B.U.H), were converted, and said, "We have left our people, al Aws and al Khazraj, who are alienated from one another and are full of hatred for one another. Would to Allah that they might meet you and unite under your leadership! Should this ever become the case, you will be the strongest man in Arabia." The group included in their numbers two men from Banū al Najjār, the uncles of 'Abd al Muttalib, and the grandfather of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) who had protected him (P.B.U.H) ever since his birth; the latter returned to Madinah and reported to their people their conversion to the new faith. The relatives received the news with joy and enthusiasm, for now they could boast of a religion that made them monotheists like the Jews—indeed more excellent than they. Soon, there was no house in al Aws or al Khazraj in which the name of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was not mentioned with reverence and awe.

The First Covenant of 'Aqabah

As the year passed and the holy months and the pilgrimage season returned, twelve men from Yathrib set out for Makkah. They met the Prophet (P.B.U.H) at al 'Aqabah and entered with him into an alliance known as "the first covenant of al 'Aqabah." In this covenant they agreed to adhere to the absolute unity of Allah, neither to steal nor to commit adultery, neither to kill their children nor knowingly to commit any evil, and not to fail to

obey Allah in His commandment of any good. They were satisfied that, in case they succeeded in living the life of virtue and obedience, their reward would be paradise; otherwise, their judgment belonged to Allah, His being the power to punish as well as to forgive. On their return to Yathrib, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) sent with them Mus'ah ih 'Umayr to teach them the Qur'ān and the precepts of Islam. After this covenant, Islam spread in Yathrib. Mus'ab resided with the Muslims of al Aws and al Khazraj and taught them the religion of Allah and the Revelation of truth while their numbers increased with new converts every day. When the holy months returned, Mus'ab traveled to Makkah and reported to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) the progress of the Muslims at Madinah in solidarity and power and informed the Prophet (P.B.U.H) that a greater numbei' of them, surpassing their predecessors in faith, would be arriving this season to perform the pilgrimage.

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) Thinks of Emigration

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) pondered the news which Mus'ab had brought for a long time. He thought of his followers in Yathrib who were increasing in number and power and who were progressing without let or hindrance from either Jews or others, unlike their colleagues in Makkah who suffered from Quraysh at every turn. He thought of Yathrib, the city of greater prosperity than Makkah on account of its large fields, its orchards and vineyards. It must have occurred to him to ask whether it might not be better that the Makkan Muslims emigrate to Yathrib, live with their co-religionists, and enjoy the security they missed so much at Makkah. In all likelihood, he pondered the observation which a member of the first group of converts from Yathrib once made, namely, that should al Aws and al Khazraj unite under him, he would be the strongest man in the country. Was it not

better, now that Allah had united them under him, that he, too, should consider to emigrate to Yathrib? Muhammad (P.B.U.H) did not want to return the injuries of Quraysh since he knew he was still weaker than they. As for his allies, Banū Hāshim and Banū al Muttalib, it is one thing for them to come to his rescue as a sufferer of their injustice, but a totally different matter for them to support him in a war of aggression against the Quraysh. He also pondered the fact that Banū Hāshim and Banū al Muttalib were not really capable of protecting all the Muslims in such an open war with Quraysh. It is true that religious conviction is man's strongest and most precious possession, for which he is prepared to sacrifice wealth, peace, freedom and life itself. It is equally true that the nature of religious conviction is such that physical injury inflames as well as strengthens it. Nonetheless, it is also true that persistence of injury, suffering, and sacrifice rob the believer of the possibility of the peaceful contemplation and precise vision necessary for the nourishment of faith and the deepening of man's awareness of ultimate reality. Previously, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had commanded his followers to emigrate to Christian Abyssinia because of its sound faith and just rule. There was all the more reason now to permit them to emigrate to Yathrib, to strengthen and be strengthened by their fellow Muslims in order to achieve a measure of peace and security against the evil designs of the enemy. There was all the more reason to ask them to do so in order to give them the chance to contemplate the religious truths, to cultivate their understanding, and to preach their faith to their fellow men. Islam had ruled out coercion and propagated itself through gentleness, persuasion, and conviction by argument alone.

The Second Covenant of 'Aqabah

The year 622 C.E. saw a great number of pilgrims, seventy-three men and two women, from Yathrib. When Muhammad

(P.B.U.H) learned of their arrival, he thought of concluding another pact with them which would not be limited to the preaching of Islam in the way followed during the last thirteen years. Beyond the preaching of gentleness and forbearance and sacrifice under attack, the times and their present dangers called for an alliance by which the Muslims would help one another to prevent as well as to repel injury and aggression. Secretly Muhammad (P.B.U.H) contacted the leaders of the group and learned of their good preparation for a task such as this. They agreed to meet at al 'Aqabah during the night on the second day following the pilgrimage. The Muslims of Yathrib kept this appointment secret and did not inform the unbelievers among their own tribe. When the time came, they went to their rendezvous with the Prophet (P.B.U.H), stealing themselves away under the cover of night. When they reached al 'Aqabah, men and women ascended the mountain and there awaited the arrival of the Prophet (P.B.U.H).

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) arrived with his uncle al 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al Muttalib. Al 'Abbās, who had not yet converted to Islam, knew from his nephew that this meeting was to conclude an alliance which might incite Quraysh to a war of aggression as much as it was designed to achieve peace and security. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had informed his uncle that together with some members of Banū al Muttalib and Banū Hāshim he had agreed with the new group from Yathrib that they would protect him personally. Anxious to strengthen his nephew and people against a war whose losses might fall heavily upon Banu Hāshim and Banu al Muttalib, al 'Abbās sought to make sure that among this group from Yathrib he would find real helpers and allies. Consequently, he was the first one to open the discussion. He said, "0 men from Khazraj, Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) eminence and prestige among us are known to you. We have protected him even against those of his own people who think as highly of him as we do. Among us, he stands strong and secure. But he insists

on joining your party. If you find yourselves capable of fulfilling toward him what you have promised, then you may proceed. But if you would betray him and send him over to his enemies once he has joined your party, you had better now say so and leave him alone." After hearing this speech of al 'Abbās, the men from Yathrib said, "We have heard what you said, 0 'Abbäs," and turning to the Prophet (P.B.U.H), they continued, "0 Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H), speak out and choose for yourself and your Lord what you desire."

Muhammad (P.B.U.H), after reciting some verses from the Qur'ān, preached his faith in Allah in moving terms. He then said to the men from Yathrib, "I covenant with you on the condition that you will protect me against all, just as you would protect your women and children." Al Barā' ibn Ma'rūr, who was chief of his people and their elder, had entered into Islam after the first covenant of al 'Aqabah. Since then he had been fulfilling all that Islam required of him, except that he directed himself toward the Ka'bah whenever he prayed. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and all the Muslims were in the practice of turning their faces toward al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. His disagreement with his people on the subject of the ***qiblah*** was brought to the attention of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) upon their arrival to Makkah. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) enjoined al Barā' not to turn his face toward the Ka'bah during prayer. Nonetheless, it was the same al Barā' who first stretched forth his hand to covenant with the Prophet (P.B.U.H) when the latter asked for the protection that the people of Yathrib were wont to give their women and children.

Discussion before Conclusion of the Covenant

Al Bara' said, "We have covenanted with you, 0 Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H). By Allah, we are men of many wars; we are

men of the sword, having inherited it from father unto son." Before al Barā' finished his words, Abu al Haytham ibn al Tayyihan said, "0 Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H), there are pacts between us and some Jews which we are going to denounce. Should your cause succeed later on among your own tribe, would you return to them and leave us alone?" Muhammad (P.B.U.H) smiled and said, "No! Rather, your blood is my blood and your destruction is my destruction. You are of me and I am of you. I shall fight whomsoever you fight and make peace with whomsoever you will make peace." The people were about to rise and give covenant to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) when al 'Abbās ibn 'Ubādah interrupted and said, "0 men of Khazraj! Are you fully aware of what you are about to covenant with this man? You are about to covenant with him to make war against all sorts of men without discrimination. If you have any fear that, should you lose your wealth and should your leaders fall by the sword, you might betray Muhammad (P.B.U.H), say so now and withdraw from this covenant. For if you do not and then betray your oath, you will have lost this world as well as the next. But if you feel certain that you can stand by him and fulfill this oath, notwithstanding the loss of your property and the murder of your dear ones, then go ahead and covenant with him. He is, by Allah, the best gain in this world and in the next."

All the people present answered together, "We take him despite all threats to property, wealth and life. Tell us, 0 Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H), what will be our reward if we remain true to this oath?" With his usual self-reliance Muhammad (P.B.U.H) answered, "Paradise." They stretched out their hands to him, and he to them, and the covenant was concluded. Thereafter, the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said, "Elect among yourselves twelve representative who will be responsible to me regarding your behavior and conduct." After they elected nine from al Khazraj and three from al Aws, the Prophet (P.B.U.H) addressed them in the following words: "You are the guarantors of your people,

just as the disciples were guarantors of theirs before Jesus, Son of Mary. I, for my part, am the guarantor of my people." Such was their second covenant which included the words, "We have covenanted to listen and to obey in health and in sickness, in fortune and misfortune, to tell the truth wherever we might be and, at all times, to fear none in the cause of Allah."

The Covenant

All this had taken place in the middle of the night atop one of the hills of al 'Aqahah in perfect isolation from the surrounding world. Only Allah, the covenantors felt certain, knew what they were about. No sooner had they terminated their meeting, however, than they heard a crier warning the Quraysh in the following words, "Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and the apostates have covenanted to make war against you." The case of this, however, was unique. He had heard a little bit about the matter as he traveled to al 'Aqabah and, being a Qurayshi and idolator, he thought of spoiling the arrangement of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and of frightening the Muslims by pretending everything the Muslims did was known to their enemies. Al Khazraj and al Aws, however, stood firm by their covenant. Indeed, al 'Abhās ibn 'Ubādah told Muhammad (P.B.U.H) immediately after he heard the crier, "By Allah, who has sent you with the truth, if you order us to pounce upon Mina tomorrow morning with our swords, we shall do so." Muhammad (P.B.U.H) answered, "Allah has not commanded us to fight. Return to your quarters." The covenanters returned to their quarters and slept until the morning.

Quraysh and the Covenant of al 'Aqabah

The morrow had hardly come when the Quraysh, learning of

the new pact, was disturbed by it. The Quraysh leaders went to al Khazraj in their own quarters and blamed them for what they had just done. The Quraysh reiterated that they sought no war against them and asked them why they had covenanted with Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to fight them on his side. The unbelievers of al Khazraj denied that any of this had taken place. The Muslims, on the other hand, kept silent and were saved from embarrassment when the Quraysh believed the claim of their co-religionists. Thus the news was neither confirmed nor denied, and the Quraysh allowed the matter to stand until new evidence could be brought forth. The people of Yathrib returned to their city before the Quraysh had reached any certainty about what had happened. When later the Quraysh did learn the truth, they ran after the people of Yathrib who had exited the day before but could catch up with none except Sa'd ibn 'Ubādah. They took him to Makkah in chains and tortured him until, Jubayr ibn Mut'am ibn 'Adiyy and al Hārith ibn Umayyah ransomed him as their agent in Yathrib when they passed by there on their way to al Sham.

Tension between the Two Parties

Neither in its fear of them nor in its attempt to catch up with the people of Yathrib, who covenanted with Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to fight against them, did the tribe of Quraysh overestimate the danger. For thirteen long years they had known and observed Muhammad (P.B.U.H). They had exerted enough effort in their war against Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to exhaust their own as well as Muhammad's energies (P.B.U.H). The Quraysh knew Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to he a very strong and tenacious man who held only to his Allah and the message He had entrusted to him. The Quraysh knew him as an unwavering man who feared neither harm nor death. For a moment it seemed to the Quraysh that after all the injuries they inflicted upon him,

after blockading him within Makkah, and frightening the tribesmen enough to keep them from joining him, Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) cause was about to fall. They predicted that Muhammad's activity (P.B.U.H) would henceforth be restricted to his followers alone and that these would soon fall apart under the constant pressures of Quraysh to seek reconciliation. The new covenant brought a new determinant into the situation and gave Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his followers some hope of victory. It at least strengthened their freedom to conduct their missionary activity and renew their attack upon the idols of the Ka'bah and their worship. But who could predict what the situation would turn out to be throughout the Arabian Peninsula after Yathrib had come to the rescue of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and both its tribes of al Aws and al Khazraj were united under his leadership? The Quraysh were rightly apprehensive of the future since the covenant of al 'Aqabah rendered the Muslims safe against attack and gave them freedom to practice their new faith, to preach it to the others, and to welcome the new converts under their protection. Quraysh thought, therefore, that unless this movement was uprooted and destroyed completely, the future would continue to be threatening and the victory of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) would be a most disturbing possibility.

The Quraysh thought very hard how it could counter-attack Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and outmaneuver him in order to destroy this latent power. He, too, gave the same problem no less thought than did the Quraysh. He looked upon the covenant as a gate which Allah had unlocked before him in order to bring power and glory to His religion, to Allah's truthful words. The war between him and the Quraysh had then reached a new level of tension by becoming a matter of life and death for both parties. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) trusted, however, that victory belonged to the truthful. He decided to rally his people to trust in Allah, in utter disregard to Quraysh and its plotting. He therefore must march forward, but with wisdom, precision, and sure step. The

new situation called for the greatest possible statesmanship and the ablest generalship in time of battle.

The Muslims' Emigration to Yathrib

Subsequently, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) commanded his companions to follow al Ansar' in Yathrib. He ordered them to exit from Makkah in very small groups so that they would not give cause to Quraysh to suspect or attack them. The Muslims began their exodus individually or in small groups. When the Quraysh realized what they were about, it began to return those whom it could catch to Makkah to suffer punishment and torture. This Makkan counter-measure was carried out with such zeal and determination that man and wife were separated whenever a pair wanted to exit from Makkah. Those who disobeyed were locked up in jail. But the Quraysh could not do more, fearful as they were of alienating the tribes by killing their Muslim members and thereby adding to their list of enemies. The Muslims, nonetheless, continued to exit from Makkah and to emigrate to Yathrib. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) remained where he was, nobody knowing whether he, too, was planning to emigrate or not. None suspected him. Previously, he had permitted his companions to emigrate to Abyssinia without going there himself; he had stayed behind and continued to call the Makkans to Islam. Indeed, even Abu Bakr asked the Prophet (P.B.U.H) for permission to emigrate to Yathrib. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) advised, "Do not hurry; perhaps Allah may yet give you a companion for your trip." No more was said regarding this matter.

The Quraysh and the Prophet's Emigration (P.B.U.H)

All this notwithstanding, the Quraysh were quite apprehensive

lest the Prophet himself (P.B.U.H) emigrate to Yathrib. The Muslims in that city had become so numerous that the dominion of the city was almost theirs. The *Muhajirun,* who were arriving at Yathrib in numbers, consolidated and increased Muslim power. Should Muhammad himself (P.B.U.H) go there, the Quraysh feared that under his wise and farsighted leadership and persistence, the people of Yathrib might even seek to attack Makkah or, at least, to cut off their trade route to al Sham. If this should ever become a real possibility, the Muslims would avenge the boycott and isolation of the Muslims in kind by cutting off the Makkan trade routes.

On the other hand, even if the Quraysh were to succeed in keeping Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in Makkah and thus prevent him from joining his companions, the Quraysh were still exposed to the danger of the people of Yathrib's attacking them in defense of their Prophet (P.B.U.H). Hence, the Quraysh decided that there was really no alternative but to kill Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and get rid of this persistent trouble once and for all. But in case they did succeed in killing him, Banū Hashim and Banfl al Muttalib would surely seek to avenge his blood, and the civil war which they feared so much would break out within Makkah and bring a greater danger than that which they feared might come from the side of Yathrib. In al Nadwah, their community house, the Quraysh gathered in order to find a means and solution. One of them suggested, "Let us catch Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and lock him up in jail. Then, wait to see happen to him that which has happened to other possessed people and poets like Zuhayr, al Nabighah, and others." This view found no supporters. Another suggested, "Let us carry him out of our country and banish him and then forget about him altogether." This, too, found no supporters because the Quraysh feared that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) might then join his followers in Yathrib and lead them against Makkah—a frightful possibility, indeed. Finally, they concluded that the best solution is that each one of their clans

delegate a strong youth and arm him with a sharp sword so that all these delegates can kill Muhammad (P.B.U.H) together in one stroke; therefore, responsibility for his death would be equally divided among all, thus making vengeance on the part of Banū 'Abd Manāf virtually impossible. The clan of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) would then be forced to accept his bloodwit, and the Quraysh would put an end to this instigator who had rent its unity and sapped its power. The Quraysh thought well of this counsel and carefully chose their executioners. They expected that the story of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was soon to come to a close, that his cause would soon be buried and forgotten, and that those who had migrated to Yathrib would soon return to their tribe, their former religion and gods, and that Quraysh would resume the unity and leadership which iu had almost lost.

10

Al Hijrah or the Prophet's Emigration (P. B.U.H)

The Command to Emigrate

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) discovered that the Quraysh had plotted to kill him rather than to allow him to emigrate to Madinah where he might entrench the forces of Islam for a resolute stand against Makkah and from where he might cut off its trade with al Sham. No one doubted that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) would henceforth seize any opportunity to carry out his plan for emigration. But no one knew of any plans he might have had; not even Abū Bakr, who had been commanded to keep two beasts alert and ready ever since he asked the Prophet (P.B.U.H) for permission to emigrate and the Prophet (P.B.U.H) advised him to wait. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) remained in Makkah until he learned of the Quraysh's plot to assassinate him, and until none but the fewest Muslims were still left there with him. He waited for the command of his Lord for emigration. When, finally, that command did come, he went to the house of Abū Bakr and informed him of the permission Allah had granted. He asked Abū Bakr to accompany him on the trip.

'Ali in the Prophet's (P.B.U.H) Bed

Here begins one of the greatest adventures history has known in the cause of truth and religious conviction. It is one of the noblest and most beautiful. Abū Bakr had chosen his two beasts and given them to 'Abdullah ibn Urayqit to graze until the time when they would be needed. When the two men planned to leave Makkah they were absolutely certain that Quraysh would follow them in their trail in order to seize them and bring them back. Hence, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) decided to surprise his enemies by leaving under circumstances and at a time hardly conceivable to them. The young men whom the Quraysh had prepared for performing the assassination had blockaded his house during the night in fear that he might run away. On the night of the Hijrah, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) confided his plan to 'Ali ibn Abu Tālib and asked him to cover himself with the Prophet's (P.B.U.H) green mantle from Iladramawt and to sleep in the Prophet's bed (P.B.U.H). He further asked him to tarry in Makkah until he had returned all things left with Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to their rightful owners. The Quraysh men waiting to kill the Prophet (P.B.U.H) felt reassured whenever, looking through a hole in the door, they saw somebody sleeping in the Prophet's bed (P.B.U.H). Just before dawn, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) left without being noticed, picked up Abū Bakr at the latter's house and from there they proceeded through a back door southward toward the cave of Thawr. The southerly direction of their flight was inconceivable to everyone.

Nobody knew of their hiding place in the cave except 'Abdullah, son of Abū Bakr, his two sisters, 'A'ishah and Asmā', and their servant 'Amir ibn Fuhayrah. 'Abdullah spent his day in Makkah listening to what the Quraysh said and plotted about Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and then reported it to the pair at their hideout under cover of night. 'Amir grazed the sheep of Abū Bakr and passed by the cave in the evening in order to give

them some milk and meat. Upon 'Abdullah's return from the cave, 'Amir would follow him with all his sheep and then conceal any trace of his steps. For three long days, the pair remained in the cave and the Quraysh persistently looked for them without avail. For the Quraysh it was absolutely necessary to find Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and to prevent his emigration to Yathrib. Meanwhile, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) spent most of his time praying to Allah and invoking his blessings, and Abū Bakr continually sought to find out whether they were being discovered and to look after their security.

The young men of Quraysh who were chosen to kill Muhammad (P.B.U.H) continued their search and came close to the cave fully armed and ready for the kill. When they found a shepherd in the vicinity, they asked him about Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and Abū Bakr. He answered, "Perhaps they are within the cave, although I have not seen anyone go in or out." When he heard the shepherd's answer, Abū Bakr trembled with fear and expected the Quraysh to break into the cave any moment. He withdrew into a corner and, trusting in Allah, remained motionless. Some members of the Quraysh party climbed up to the cave, and the foremost among them turned round as soon as he saw the cave entrance. His companions asked him, "Why have you not gone into the cave?" He answered, "Its entrance is covered with cobwebs, and there is a pair of wild pigeons on the threshold. Obviously, no one could have gone in without disturbing the pigeons and destroying the cobwebs." At that moment, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) prayed while Abū Bakr continued to shake with fear. To Abū Bakr, who pressed ever closer to Muhammad (P.B.U.H), the latter whispered, "Do not grieve; Allah is with us." According to some Hadith books, it is reported that when the Quraysh party arrived at the cave entrance, Abū Bakr exclaimed: "If any one of them looks at his feet he will find us," and that the Prophet (P.B.U.H) had answered, "0 Abū Bakr, how can you fear for two men whose

constant companion is Allah Himself ?" The Quraysh men were further convinced that the cave was empty when they saw the entrance to the cave covered—indeed blocked—with branches growing from a tree nearby. They then agreed to leave and called one another for their return to Makkah. Only then did the two refugees within the cave feel reassured. Abū Bakr's faith in Allah and His Prophet (P.B.U.H) became stronger, and Muhammad (P.B.U.H) prayed: "Praise be to Allah! Allah is greater than all!"

The Miracle of the Cave

The cobwebs, the two wild pigeons, and the tree and its branches—these are the miracles which the biography books relate concerning the hiding in the cave of Thawr. The miracle is that none of these things were there when the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and his companion entered the cave, and that thereafter, the spider hurried to weave its cobwebs, the two pigeons to build their nest and to lay their eggs, and the tree to grow its branches around the door. In this connection the orientalist Dermenghem wrote, "These three things are the only miracles recorded in authentic Mussulman history: the web of a spider, the love of a dove, the sprouting of a flower—three miracles accomplished daily on Allah's earth."'

Some Biographers Omit the Story

This miracle received no mention in Ibn Hishām's biography. His version of the story of the cave ran as follows: "They [Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and Abū Bakr] went to the cave of Thawr, on the south side of Makkah. Abu Bakr ordered his son 'Abdullah to stay in Makkah during the day, listen to the

news of the Quraysh and bring them knowledge thereof in the evening. He ordered his servant, 'Amir ibn Fuhayrah, to continue to graze his sheep and to come by the cave at night. Asmā', daughter of Abū Bakr, brought them provisions of food in the evening, also. The Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H) stayed in the cave three days. The Quraysh had announced a prize of one hundred camels to whosoever would bring back Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to Makkah. 'Abdullah, son of Abū Bakr, used to spend his day in Makkah listening well to the plotting and gossip of the Quraysh, and when visiting the pair in the evening, related the news to them. 'Amir ibn Fuhayrah, servant of Abū Bakr, used to graze the flock of sheep around Makkah and, in the evening, passed by the cave and gave milk and meat to the pair. When 'Abdullah, son of Abū Bakr, returned home to Makkah, he was followed by 'Amir ibn Fuhayrah and his sheep in order to cover over his footprints. Three days later, when the interest of the Quraysh in this search had subsided, the man whom Aba Bakr had appointed to graze the two camels for the trip came with the three camels, two for Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and Abu Bakr, and a third for himself. . . ." That is all that Ibn Hishām says concerning the story of the cave.

In the same connection, the following verses of the Qur'ān were revealed:

﴿ وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ ۚ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ ٱللَّهُ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ خَيْرُ ٱلْمَـٰكِرِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ ﴾ سورة الأنفال آية ٣٠

(Remember how the Unbelievers plotted against you, to keep you in bonds, or slay you, or get you out (of thy home). They plot and plan, and Allah too plans, but the best of planners is Allah.) (Al-Anfal: 30)

﴿ إِلَّا تَنصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ ٱللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ ثَانِىَ
ٱثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِى ٱلْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَٰحِبِهِۦ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ مَعَنَا ۖ
فَأَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُۥ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُۥ بِجُنُودٍ لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ
ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ ٱلسُّفْلَىٰ ۗ وَكَلِمَةُ ٱللَّهِ هِىَ ٱلْعُلْيَا ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ
حَكِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ ﴾ سورة التوبة آية ٤٠

(If you help not (the Prophet), (it is no matter): for Allah did indeed help him, when the Unbelievers drove him out: being the second of the two: they two they were in the Cave, and he said to his companion, "Have no fear for Allah is with us": Then Allah sent down His peace upon him, and strengthened him with forces which you saw not, and humbled to the depths the word of the Unbelievers. But the word of Allah is exalted to the heights: for Allah is Exalted in might, Wise.)
(At-Tawbah: 40)

The Trip to Yathrib

On the third day, when they felt certain that the Quraysh had called off the hunt for them in the vicinity, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and Abū Bakr commanded their servant to bring them their camels for emigrate. The servant managed to bring a third camel for himself. Asmā', daughter of Abū Bakr, brought them provisions. As they mounted, they could not find ropes with which to tie their provisions of food and water. Asmā' cut her robe in two and used one half of it for the purpose while

covering herself with the other half. For this reason she was called "the woman with the two half-robes." Their provisions taken care of, the three men went forth. Abū Bakr carried five thousand Dirhims which was all that was left of his wealth. Lest the Quraysh should find them, they cautiously took an untrodden path toward their destination. Their servant and guide, 'Abdullah ibn Urayqit, from the tribe of Banū al Du'il, headed south of Makkah and then to the mountain range of Tihāmat close by the shore of the Red Sea. From there he took an unknown path northward parallel to the shore but far removed from it. His purpose was always to remain off the beaten track. All night and most of the day the riders pressed forth unaffected by fatigue or hardship, for every hardship was preferable—indeed easy by comparison—to what the Quraysh was prepared to do to destroy them and their cause! Muhammad (P.B.U.H) never doubted that Allah would come to his help, but Allah had also commanded man not to expose himself to open risks. Allah had counselled that He would assist man only as long as man helped himself and his brother. The two men were successful in their hiding in the cave. However, the Quraysh's announcement of an hundred camel prize to whoever would bring them back or furnish information which would lead to their capture was sufficient to mobilize the wealthseeking Makkans for the search, even if it was a criminal one. Still, the Arabs of Quraysh had additional motivation to conduct such a search, for they regarded Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as their enemy ***par excellence;*** and they were so revengeful and passionate in their hate that no consideration could stop them from exploiting the weak and injuring the harmless. Therefore, they redoubled their attentiveness and renewed their vigor for the search.

The Story of Surāqah

Their intuition did not fail them. A man soon arrived at

Makkah to report that on his way he met three riders whom he thought were Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his companions. Upon hearing this report, Suraqah ibn Mālik ibn Ju'shum immediately said, "Those are the sons of so and so." His purpose was to lead his companions into disregarding the report so that he might capture Muhammad (P.B.U.H)single-handed and win the prize of the hundred camels. A moment later, he returned home, loaded himself with arms, and ordered his servant to take his horse to the outskirts of the city so that no one would see him go. There, he arrayed himself for battle, mounted his horse, and galloped toward the spot where Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was reported to have been seen. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his two companions had at that time repaired to a tree to rest a little under its shade, to eat a meal and to replenish their energies.

The time was close to evening. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and Abu Bakr began to ready their beasts to resume their ride. Suraqah was still as far from them as the eye could see. Exhausted with fatigue from all its galloping, Suraqah's horse fell twice on the way. When the travelers came into his sight, and he realized he could now capture or kill them, Suraqah forgot that his horse had fallen twice already. He spurred it once more and hurried it toward them. The horse fell to the ground with its rider. At this turn, Surāqah felt very apprehensive that the gods were against the execution of his scheme and that he might be exposing himself to grave danger should he spur his horse forward for the fourth time. After stopping, he called to the travelers: "I am Suraqah ibn Ju'shum. Wait for me so that I may talk to you. By God, I shall do you neither harm or injury." When he arrived, he asked Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to write him a note with which to prove his present encounter. At the Prophet's command (P.B.U.H), Abu Bakr wrote a note to this effect which Suraqah took and returned home. Made contrite by his unfortunate venture, he spread the news that the riders were not Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his party at all!

The Hardships of the Road

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his two companions set forth toward Yathrib across mountains, hills, and deserts whose sands were glowing with heat. Since they were off the beaten track, they found hardly anything with which to alleviate the hardships of sun and thirst. Furthermore, they were ever apprehensive that the Quraysh or some other people might surprise and overtake them. Their only consolation was their patient trust in Allah and the truth revealed to His Prophet (P.B.U.H). For seven consecutive days they travelled, lying low during the heat of day and moving with great haste under cover of night. In the stillness of night and the brilliance of its stars lay their only security and assurance. When they reached the quarters of the tribe of Banū Sahm, where elder chieftain Buraydah came over to greet them, their fears lessened, and for the first time, their hearts palpitated with the hope and assurance of victory. They had almost reached their destination.

Awaiting the Prophet in Yathrib

During Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) long and exhaustive trip, the news reached his companions in Yathrib that he had emigrated from Makkah in order to join them. Aware of the enmity of the Quraysh and of their attempts to follow and to seize the Prophet (P.B.U.H), the Muslims waited anxiously for his arrival and looked very much forward to hearing the details of his emigrate. Many of them had never seen the Prophet (P.B.U.H) before although they had heard a great deal about his eloquence and resolution. Naturally, they were quite anxious to meet him (P.B.U.H). We can imagine the enthusiasm of these men when we know that a number of notables from Yathrib had followed Muhammad (P.B.U.H) even though they had never seen him

(P.B.U.H) before. Their knowledge of him depended on his companions who had spoken to them of their love for him and who had been staunchly carrying his message about.

The Spread of Islam in Yathrib

Sa'd ibn Zurārah and Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr once sat in one of the courtyards of Banū Zafar listening to the speech of those who entered into Islam. Their news had reached Sa'd ibn Mu'ādh and Usayd ibn Hudayr, chieftains of their tribes. Sa'd said to Usayd, as one chieftain to another, "Go out to these two men who came here to subvert the weaklings among us. Chastise them and forbid them to come here again. You can do this better than I because Sa'd ibn Zurarah is a cousin of mine and I cannot be harsh enough to him." Usayd went out to seek the two men. Mus'ab said, "Will you not sit down and listen to us? If you hear something worthwhile, accept it. If, on the other hand, you hear something unworthy, you may put a quick end to it." Usayd replied, "You are fair." He stuck his spear into the ground and sat down listening to Mus'ab's preaching of Islam. No sooner had Mus'ab finished than Usayd was converted to Islam. When he returned, his fellow chieftain, Sa'd, was annoyed at this and sought out the two men in person. They offered him the same choice, and he, too, was converted. Following upon this, Sa'd went to his people and said, "Oh, Banū 'Abd al Ashhal, what do you think of me?" They answered, "You are our chieftain, our dearest relative, our wise leader and righteous representative." He said, "Then I shall forbid myself to speak to any of your men and women until you believe in Allah and in His prophet (P.B.U.H)." Banū 'Abd al Ashhal then entered into the faith ***en bloc.***

Islam had spread so widely in Yathrib and the Muslims had gathered so much strength before the emigration of the Prophet

(P.B.U.H) that some Muslim youths were encouraged to attack the idols of the unbelievers. Apparently Islam had enjoyed a strength that the Muslims of Makkah had never dreamt of before. 'Amr ibn al Jamuh had a wooden idol which he called Manat and which he kept in his house according to the custom of the nobility, ior he was one of the noblemen of Banū Salamah. When the youths of his tribe joined Islam, they raided his house at night and, without his knowledge, would steal away the idol and place it in the refuse dump outside the city. In the morning, 'Amr would miss his statue and look for it. When he found it, he would cleanse, purify, and return it to its place. All along, he would curse and threaten the offenders in the strongest terms. The youth of Banu Salamah continued their attacks upon this idol until one day 'Amr hung his sword on the shoulder of the statue and said to it, "If there is any power in you, there's my sword, defend yourself." The following morning, however, he found the idol robbed of its sword and tied to a dead dog inside an empty pit. At that moment, his people talked to him and showed him how unworthy of man is idolatry. He was convinced and entered Islam.

With all these successes which Islam had been scoring in Yathrib, the people of Yathrib looked forward quite eagerly to the arrival of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) when they heard of his emigration. For many days before his arrival, they went out to the outskirts of their city at dawn to spend the morning seeking signs of the Prophet's arrival (P.B.U.H).

The month was July and the days were hot. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) reached Quba', two leagues from Madinah, and stayed there four days with Abū Bakr being constantly with him. During this interval, he founded a mosque and before he left for Madinah, 'Ali ibn Abū Talib had joined his party. 'All had returned the trusts left with Muhammad (P.B.U.H) which Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had asked him to return to their rightful owners, and he came to Yathrib on foot, walking during the

night and hiding during the day. He had been on the road for two whole weeks in order to join the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and his fellow Muslims in Madinah.

Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) Entry into Madina

One day, as the Muslims waited the arrival of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), a Jew of Yathrib announced to them, "0 People of Qaylah, your man has finally arrived." It was a Friday, and Muhammad (P.B.U.H) performed his prayer in Madinah at the mosque situated in the valley of Ranuqna. The Muslims of Yathrib arrived there from all quarters in order to see the man whom they had not seen, but whom they loved with all their minds and hearts, in whose message they had believed, and whose name they had mentioned many times in their daily prayers. A number of notables invited the Prophet (P.B.U.H) to stay in their houses and to enjoy the comforts, security, and protection of their quarters. As Muhammad (P.B.U.H) apologized, he rode his camel, which he allowed to go free, toward the city. As it ran forth surrounded by the Muslims who opened the way for it, the people of Yathrib, whether Jews or unbelievers, looked with surprise on the new agitation and vitality that had suddenly seized their city. They looked at this great visitor who was equally acclaimed by al Aws and al Khazraj, who had until recently been death enemies of each other. No one among them apparently grasped the new direction which history was taking at that auspicious moment, nor the great destiny at work to make their city immortal. The Prophet's (P.B.U.H) camel continued to run until it stopped at a yard belonging to two orphans of Banū al Najjar. There, the camel lay down and the Prophet dismounted. Upon inquiring who the owner of the yard was, he learned from Mu'ādh ibn 'Afrā' that it belonged to Sahl and Suhayl, sons of 'Amr, of whom he was the

guardian. He asked the Prophet (P.B.U.H) to build a mosque there and made a promise to satisfy the two orphans. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) accepted the request by building his mosque as well as his living quarters there.

11

Beginning of the Yathrib Period

Explanation of the City's Welcome

Having heard the news of his emigration, of Quraysh's plot to kill him, and of his travel in mid-summer on an untrodden path ridden with hardships—across rocky mountains and valleys aglow with fire under the torrid sun—individuals and groups of men and women went out to welcome Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to their city. Excited by their own curiosity after the spread of the news of Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) mission throughout the Arabian Peninsula, the people of Yathrib went out to see and meet the author of this call to renounce the holy faith and sacred beliefs of their ancestors. More importantly, they went out to meet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and to welcome him because his intention was henceforth to live with them in their own city. Every clan and tribe of Yathrib well knew what political, social, and other advantages it stood to gain should it succeed in convincing the new guest to reside in its midst. Indeed, they went out to take a look at this man that they might confirm their intuition concerning him. Hence, neither the unbeLievers of Yathrib nor its Jews were any less enthusiastic than the Muslims, whether Muhājirūn or Ansār. That is why they came from all sides to walk in his procession although each was naturally

moved by different feelings. As Muhammad (P.B.U.H) allowed his camel to run loose, they followed him in a disorderly manner; it was as if he had intended it that way in order to give each one of them a chance to come closer to him to take a nearer glimpse of his face. It was as if everyone had come out in order to gather in one moment of consciousness all that he had heard about and all that he could see of the person to whom he had given the grand oath of allegiance at al 'Aqabah where he pledged to lay down his life when necessary in fighting any man whatever that stood in the way of the faith. It was, furthermore, as if everyone wanted to see the man who taught the unity of Allah based upon a scientific investigation of the cosmos and an objective search for the truth: a doctrine for the sake of which he had abandoned his native town, its people, and borne their enmity and harm for some thirteen consecutive years.

Building of the Prophet's Mosque (P.B.U.H)

We have seen that the Prophet's camel (P.B.U.H) stopped in the courtyard of Sahl and Suhayl. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) bought the land in order to build his mosque there. While the mosque was being erected, he stayed in the house of Abu Ayyub Khālid ibn Zayd al Ansāri. In the construction of the mosque, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) worked with his own hands as did the Muslims, whether Muhājirun or Ansār. When the mosque was completed, they built on one side of it living quarters for the Prophet (P.B.U.H). These operations did not overtax anyone, for the two structures were utterly simple and economical. The mosque consisted of a vast courtyard whose four walls were built out of bricks and mud. A part of it was covered with a ceiling made from date trunks and leaves. Another part was devoted to shelter the poor who had no home at all. The mosque was not lit during the night except for an hour at the time of the night

prayer. At that time some straw was burned for light. Thus it continued to be for nine years, after which lamps were attached to the tree trunks on which stood the ceiling. The living quarters of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) were no more luxurious than the mosque although they had to be more closed in order to give a measure of privacy.

Upon completion of the building, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) left the house of Abu Ayyuh and moved into the new quarters. He began to think of this new life which he had just initiated and the wide gate it opened for his mission. The various tribes and clans (of this city were already competing with one another; and they (differed among themselves in ways and for reasons unknown to any Makkan. Yet it was equally obvious that they all longed for peace and freedom from the differences and hostilities which had torn them apart in the past. Moreover, they were ambitious for and willing to build a peaceful future capable of greater prestige and prosperity than Makkah had ever enjoyed. That is not to say that these matters concerned Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in the least. Rather, his concern, whether immediate or ultimate, was the conveyance of the message Allah had entrusted to him. The people of Makkah had resisted that message with every weapon they knew, and their hostility prevented its light from shining in the hearts of most men. The injury and harm the Quraysh were wont to inflict upon anyone who ventured into the new faith was sufficient to prevent conversion of those who were not yet convinced of its truth and value. Hence it was a cardinal need that Muslims as well as others feel certain that whoever followed the new guidance and entered into the religion of Allah was absolutely secure against attack. This precaution was necessary in order to confirm the believers in their faith and to enable the weak, the fearful, and the hesitant to enter into the faith with confidence. This consideration preoccupied Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as he moved to the security of his new home in Yathrib. In the years to follow, it constituted the cornerstone of

his policy. All biographies have emphasized this orientation of Muhammad's policies (P.B.U.H). At the time, he thought of neither property, nor wealth, nor trade, but only of realizing the security of his followers and their right to worship as they pleased on an equal footing with men of other faiths. It was absolutely necessary that the Muslim, the Jew, and the Christian have an equal opportunity in their exercise of religious freedom as well as in their freedom to hold different opinions and to preach their own faiths. Only such freedom can guarantee victory for the truth and progress of the world toward perfection in the higher unity of mankind. Every war against this freedom furthers the cause of falsehood. Every limitation of it gives power to the forces of darkness to cut off the light shining within the soul calling man to unity with mankind and the world to an eternal bond of harmony and love instead of alienation, war, and extinction.

Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) Aversion to War

Ever since the Hijrah, Revelation persistently confirmed this orientation of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and caused him strongly to incline toward peace, away from fighting, hostility or war. It made him regard fighting as the last resort in defense of this freedom and this faith. When, at the cry of the Qurayshi spy, the people of Yathrib who pledged to him their allegiance at the second al 'Aqabah meeting proclaimed, "By Allah who sent you as a messenger of the truth, if you wish us to pounce on the quarter of Minā tomorrow morning with swords drawn, not one of us will stay behind," did Muhammad (P.B.U.H) not respond: "God has not commanded us to fight"? Did not the first verse granting such authority say:

﴿ أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَٰتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظُلِمُوا۟ ۚ وَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ ﴾ سورة الحج آية ٣٩

(To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged; and verily, Allah is Most Powerful for their aid) (Al-Hajj: 39)

﴿ وَقَٰتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ ٱلدِّينُ كُلُّهُۥ لِلَّهِ ۚ فَإِنِ ٱنتَهَوْا۟ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴾
سورة الأنفال آية ٣٩

(And fight them on until there is no more persecution and religion besomes Allah's in its entirety but if they cease, verily Allah doth see all that they do.) (Al-Anfal: 39)

Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) thought was then guided by one final objective, namely, the guarantee of freedom of religion and thought. It was for the sake of this freedom alone that fighting was permitted. It was in its defense that repulsion of the aggressor was allowed, that no one might be persecuted on account of his faith and that no injustice might befall anyone because of his faith or opinion.

The Thinking of Yathrib

While Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was occupied by this line of thought and pondered over the measures necessary for guaranteeing this freedom, the people of Yathrib entertained different ideas. Each clan and party followed a line of thought

peculiar to itself. The Muslims were either Muhājirun or Ansār; the unbelievers belonged to either al Aws or al Khazraj and were committed to a long history of mutual hostility, as we have shown earlier. There were also the Jews, of whom the Banū Qaynuqa' lived within the city, the Banū Qurayzah in the suburb of Fadak, the Banū al Nadir, nearby, and those of Khaybar toward the north. As for the Muslims, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) feared that, despite the strongest ties with which the new religion had bound them together, the old hatred and prejudice might some day break out anew between them. The unbelievers, from al Aws or al Khazraj, were exhausted by the previous wars; they found themselves situated, in the new configuration of society, between the Jews and the Muslims. The unbelievers' strategy concentrated on dividing Jew and Muslim and pulling them farther apart. The Jews, for their part, gave Muhammad (P.B.U.H) a good welcome in the hope of winning him over to their side. Their strategy demanded that they make use of the new unity of the Peninsula which he could help forge to bolster their opposition to Christendom. For to avenge their banishment from Palestine, the land of promise, and their national home, was the guiding concern of the Jews who saw themselves as Allah's chosen people. Each group followed its own train of thought and began to seek the means to realize its objective.

Muslim Brotherhood

At this time a new stage, unlike any other prophet (P.B.U.H) before him (P.B.U.H), began in the career of Muhammad (P.B.U.H). Here began the political stage in which Muhammad (P.B.U.H) showed such great wisdom, insight, and statesmanship as would arrest attention first in surprise and then in awe and reverence. Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) great concern was to bring to his new home town a political and organizational

unity hitherto unknown to Hijāz, though not to ancient Yaman. He consulted with Abū Bakr and 'Umar, his two viziers, as he used to call them. Naturally, the first idea to occur to him was that of reorganizing Muslim ranks so as to consolidate their unity and to wipe out every possibility of a resurgence of division and hostility. In the realization of this objective, he asked the Muslims to fraternize with one another for the sake of Allah and to bind themselves together in pairs. He explained hoW he and 'Ali ibn Abū Tālib were brothers, how his uncle Hamzah and his client, Zayd, were also brothers, as were likewise Abū Bakr and Khārijah ibn Zayd, and 'Umar ibn al Khattāb and Itbān ibn Mālik al Khazraji. Despite the Muhājirun's rapid increase in number, following the emigration of the Prophet (P.B.U.H), everyone of them was now bound to a member of al Ansār group in a bond of mutual assistance. The Prophet's (P.B.U.H) proclamation in this regard transformed that bond into one of blood and real fraternity. A new, genuine brotherhood arose which forged the Muslim ranks into an indivisible unity.

The Traders

Al Ansār showed their Muhājirūn brethren great hospitality which the latter had first accepted with joy. For when they emigrated from Makkah, they had left behind all their property, wealth, and goods and entered Madinah devoid of the means with which to find their food. Only 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān was able to carry with him enough of his wealth to be prosperous in his new residence. The others had hardly been able to carry much or little that was of use to them. Even Hamzah, the Prophet's uncle (P.B.U.H), had one day to ask the Prophet (P.B.U.H) to give him some food to eat. 'Abd al Rahman ibn 'Awf and Sa'd ibn al Rabi' were bonded together in brotherhood. The former had nothing. The latter offered to split his wealth with him. 'Abd al

Rahman refused and asked that he be shown the market place. There he began to sell cheese and butter and in short time achieved a measure of affluence fair enough to enable him to ask the hand of a MadInese woman as well as to send caravans in trade. Many other Muhājirun followed the example of 'Abd al Rahman; for, the Makkans, it should be remembered, were quite adept in trade. Indeed, they were so expert at it that it was said of them that they could by trade change the sand of the desert into gold.

The Harvest

Those who could not engage in trade such as Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Ali ibn Abū Tālib and others, took to farming on the land owned by al Ansār under the system of sharecropping. Another group of truly helpless people, with a past full of suffering and hardship, put their hand to menial jobs, preferring hard labor to living as parasites on the earnings of others. Despite their meager earnings, they found consolation in the new peace and security of their own persons and of their faith. There was yet another group of emigrants so poor and helpless that they could not find even a place to sleep. To these, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) permitted the use of the covered part of the mosque during the night. That is why they were called "Ahl al Suffah," ***"suffah,"*** meaning the covered area of the mosque. To these, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) assigned a ration from the wealth of the more affluent Muslims, whether Ansar or Muhājirūn.

Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) Friendliness to the Jews

By this new brotherhood, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) achieved an operational Muslim unity. Politically, it was a very wise move

destined to show Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) sound judgment and foresight. We shall better appreciate its wisdom when we learn of the attempts to divide al Aws against al Khazraj, and al Ansār against al Muhājirūn. The politically greater achievement of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was his realization of a unity for the city of Yathrib as a whole, his construction of a political structure in which the Jews entered freely into an alliance of mutual cooperation with the Muslims. We have already seen how the Jews gave Muhammad (P.B.U.H) a good welcome in the hope of winning him as an ally. He, too, returned their greeting with like gestures and sought to consolidate his relations with them. He visited their chiefs and cultivated the friendship of their nobles. He bound himself to them in a bond of friendship on the grounds that they were scripturists and monotheists. So much had Muhammad (P.B.U.H) defended the Jews that the fact that he fasted with them on the days they fasted and prayed toward Jerusalem as they did increased his personal and religious esteem among them. Everything seemed as if the future could only strengthen this Muslim-Jewish friendship and produce further co-operation and closeness between them. Similarly, Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) own conduct, his great humility, compassion, and faithfulness, and his outgoing charity and goodness to the poor, oppressed and deprived, as well as the prestige and influence which these qualities had won for him among all the people of Yathrib—all these enabled him to conclude the pact of friendship, alliance, and cooperation in the safeguarding of religious freedom throughout the city. In our opinion, this covenant is one of the greatest political documents which history has known. Such an accomplishment by Muhammad (P.B.U.H) at this stage of his career had never been reached by any prophet (P.B.U.H). Jesus, Moses, and all the prophets that preceded them never went beyond the preaching of their religious messages through words and miracles. All of them had left their legacy to men of power and political authority who

came after them; it was the latter who put their powers at the service of those messages and fought, with arms where necessary, for the freedom of the people to believe. Christianity spread at the hands of the disciples of Jesus and after his time, but only in extremely limited measure. The disciples as well as their followers were persecuted until one of the kings of the world favored this religion, adopted it, and put his royal power behind its missionary effort. All other religions in the East and the West have had nearly the same history, but not the religion of Muhammad (P.B.U.H). Allah willed that Islam be spread by Muhammad (P.B.U.H), and that the truth be vindicated by his hand. He willed Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to be prophet (P.B.U.H), statesman, fighter, and conqueror, all for the sake of Allah and the truth with which he was commissioned as prophet. In all these aspects of his career Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was great, the exemplar of human perfection, the *typos* of every realized value.

The covenant of Madinah concluded between Muhājirun and Ansār on one side and Jews on the other, was dictated by Muhammad (P.B.U.H). It was the instrument of their alliance which confirmed the Jews in both their religion and position in society, and determined their rights as well as their duties. Following is the text of this important document:

"In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful. This is a covenant given by Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to the believers and Muslims of Quraysh, Yathrib, and those who followed them, joined them, and fought with them. They constitute one Ummah to the exclusion of all other men. As was their custom, the Muhājirūn from Quraysh are bound together and shall ransom their prisoners in kindness and justice as believers do. Following their own custom, Banu 'Awf are bound together as they have been before. Every clan of them shall ransom its prisoners with the kindness and justice common among believers. [The text here repeats the same prescription concerning every clan of the

Ansār and every house including Banū al Harith, Bana Sā'idah, Banū Jusham, Banū al Najjār, Banū 'Amr ibn 'Awf and Banu al Nabit.] The believers shall leave none of their members in destitution without giving him in kindness what he needs by way of ransom or bloodwit. No believer shall take as an ally a freedman of another Muslim without the permission of his previous master. All pious believers shall rise as one man against whosoever rebels or seeks to commit injustice, aggression, sin, or spread mutual enmity between the believers, even though he may be one of their sons. No believer shall slay a believer in retaliation for an unbeliever; neither shall he assist an unbeliever against a believer. Just as Allah's bond is one and indivisible, all believers shall stand behind the commitment of the least of them. All believers are bonded one to another to the exclusion of other men. Any Jew who follows us is entitled to our assistance and the same rights as any one of us, without injustice or partisanship. This *Pax Islamica* is one and indivisible. No believer shall enter into a separate peace without all other believers whenever there is fighting in the cause of Allah, but will do so only on the basis of equality and justice to all others. In every military expedition we undertake our members shall be accompanied by others committed to the same objective. All believers shall avenge the blood of one another whenever any one of them falls fighting in the cause of Allah. The pious believers follow the best and most upright guidance. No unbeliever shall be allowed to place under his protection against the interest of a believer, any wealth or person belonging to Quraysh. Whoever is convicted of killing a believer deliberately but without righteous cause, shall be liable to the relatives of the killed. Until the latter are satisfied, the killer shall be subject to retaliation by each and every believer. The killer shall have no rights whatever until this right of the believers is satisfied. Whoever has entered into this covenant and believed in Allah and in the last day shall never protect or give shelter to a convict

or a criminal; whoever does so shall be cursed by Allah and upon him shall the divine wrath fall on the day of judgment. Neither repentence nor ransom shall be acceptable from him. No object of contention among you may not be referred to God and to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) for judgment. As the Jews fight on the side of the believers, they shall spend of their wealth on equal par with the believers. The Jews of Banū Aws are an *ummah* alongside the believers. The Jews have their religion and the Muslims theirs. Both enjoy the security of their own populace and clients except the unjust and the criminal among them. The unjust or the criminal destroys only himself and his family. The Jews of Banu al Najjār, Banū al Hānith, Banu Sā'idah, Banū Jusham, Banu al Aws, Banū Tha'labah, Jafnah, and Banū al Shutaybah—to all the same rights and privileges apply as to the Jews of Banū Aws. The clients of the tribe of Tha'labah enjoy the same rights and duties as the members of the tribe themselves. Likewise, the clients of the Jews, as the Jews themselves. None of the foregoing shall go out to war except with the permission of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) though none may be prevented from taking revenge for a wound inflicted upon him. Whoever murders anyone will have murdered himself and the members of his family, unless it be the case of a man suffering a wrong, for Allah will accept his action. The Jews shall bear their public expenses and so will the Muslims. Each shall assist the other against any violator of this covenant. Their relationship shall be one of mutual advice and consultation, and mutual assistance and charity rather than harm and aggression. However, no man is liable to a crime committed by his ally. Assistance is due to the party suffering an injustice, not to one perpetrating it. Since the Jews fight on the side of the believers they shall spend their wealth on a par with them. The town of Yathrib shall constitute a sanctuary for the parties of this covenant. Their neighbors shall be treated as themselves as long as they perpetrate no crime and commit no harm. No woman

may be taken under protection without the consent of her family. Whatever difference or dispute between the parties to this covenant remains unsolved shall be referred to Allah and to Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H) Allah is the guarantor of the piety and goodness that is embodied in this covenant. Neither the Quraysh nor their allies shall be given any protection. The people of this covenant shall come to the assistance of one another against whoever attacks Yathrib. If they are called to cease hostilities and to enter into a peace, they shall be bound to do so in the interest of peace. If, on the other hand, they call upon the Muslims to cease hostilities and to enter into a peace, the Muslims shall be bound to do so and maintain the peace except when the war is against their religion. To every smaller group belongs the share which is their due as members of the larger group which is party to this covenant. The Jews of al Aws, as well as their clients, are entitled to the same rights as this covenant has granted to its parties together with the goodness and charity of the latter. Charity and goodness are clearly distinguishable from crime and injury, and there is no responsibility except for one's own deeds.

Allah is the guarantor of the truth and good will of this covenant. This covenant shall constitute no protection for the unjust or the criminal. Whoever goes out to fight as well as whoever stays at home shall be safe and secure in this city unless he has perpetrated an injustice or committed a crime. Allah grants His protection to whosoever acts in piety, charity and goodness."

New Horizons in Political Life

The foregoing political document, which Muhammad (P.B.U.H) wrote down fourteen centuries ago, establishes the freedom of faith and opinion, the invioliability of the city, human

life, and property, and the forbiddance of crime. It certainly constitutes a breakthrough in the political and civil life of the world of that time. For that age was one in which exploitation, tyranny, and corruption were well established. Though the Jews of Banū Qurayzah, Banū al Nadir, and Banu Qaynuqa' did not sign this covenant at its conclusion, they did enter later on into like pacts with the Prophet (P.B.U.H). Thus Madinah and all the territories surrounding it became inviolate to their peoples who were now bound to rise to their defense and protection together. These peoples were now bound to guarantee one another in the implementation of the covenant, in the establishment of the rights arisiring therefrom, and in the provision of freedom it has called for.

The Prophet's (P.B.U.H) Marriage to 'A'ishah

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was satisfied with the result of his negotiations. The Muslims felt secure in their religion and began to practice its duties and precepts as individuals and groups in public, without fear of attack or harm from any source. At this time Muhammad (P.B.U.H) married 'A'ishah, daughter of Abū Bakr, who was then ten or eleven years old. She was a beautiful, delicate, and amiable young girl, emerging out of childhood and blossoming into full womanhood. Although she was fully grown, she was still quite attracted by amusement and play. She had a room of her own near that of Sawdah alongside the mosque. In Muhammad (P.B.U.H), she found not only a sympathetic and loving husband but also a compassionate father who was not at all offended by her inclination to play games and amuse herself with trifles. On the contrary, she was for him a source of relaxation from the continuous tension imposed upon him by his great burden to which the government of Yathrib had just been added.

Adhān or the Call to Prayer

It was during this interval in which the Muslims felt secure in their religion that the duties of *zakāt,* fasting, and legal sanctions of Islam were imposed and its dominion was firmly established in Yathrib. Ever since Muhammad (P.B.U.H) arrived in Madinah, whenever the time of prayer came, the people assembled around the Prophet (P.B.U.H) without call. It occurred to him (P.B.U.H) to have the Muslims called for prayer by means of a horn, following the style of the Jews, but he found the idea unbecoming. He had also thought of using the clapper, in the manner of the Christians. After consulting 'Umar and a number of Muslims, according to one report, and by the command of Allah, according to another, he changed his idea to the *adhān* and commanded 'Abdullah ibn Zayd ibn Tha'labah: "Get up with Bilāl and dictate the call to prayer to him, but let him deliver it forth for he has a more beautiful voice than yours." A woman of Banū al Najjar owned a house next door to the mosque which was higher than the latter. Bilāl used to ascend to the roof of that house and deliver the call to prayer f.rom there. Thus the people of Yathrib all began to hear the call to prayer many times a day beginning at dawn. The Islamic call to prayer was equally a call to Islam sung beautifully by a beautiful voice and carried on the waves of the air unto all corners of the horizon. It was a call which penetrated the ear of life itself. It said, "Allah is greater. Allah is greater. I witness that there is no God but Allah. I witness that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is the Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H). Rise to prayer. Rise to felicity. Allah is greater. Allah is greater. There is no God but Allah." Henceforth, the Muslims' fears were dissipated and they felt secure. Yathrib became Madinah al Nabiy or "the City of the Prophet (P.B.U.H)." While the non-Muslim inhabitants began to fear Muslim power—knowing well that it stemmed from the

depth of hearts which had tasted sacrifice and persecution for the sake of faith, the Muslims collected the fruits of their patience and enjoyed their religious freedom. There peace and freedom were now made constitutional by the Islamic principles that no man has any authority over any other, that religion belongs to Allah alone, that service is to Him alone, that before Hi all men are absolutely equal, and that nothing differentiates them except their works and intentions. In MadInah, the atmosphere was finally cleared of all impediments, and Muhammad (P.B.U.H) openly proclaimed his teachings. The theater was ready and the stage was set for Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to constitute by his conduct the ideal exemplification and embodiment of these teachings and principles, and for his laying down the foundation stone of Islamic civilization.

Brotherhood: Foundation of Islamic Civilization

The rock bottom foundation of Islamic civilization is human brotherhood, a brotherhood under which man does not become truly human until he has loved for his brother what he loves for himself and implemented this love by deeds of goodness and mercy without weakness or servility. A man once asked Muhammad (P.B.U.H), "Which Islam is better?" Muhammad (P.B.U.H) answered, "That you give food to the needy and that you greet those whom you know as well as those whom you don't." He opened the first sermon he delivered in Madinah with the statement, "Whoever can protect his face from the fire even with a basket of dates, let him do so; and whoever does not find even that much, then let him do so with a good word, for the good word brings a reward ten times greater than itself." In his second sermon he said, "Worship Allah and do not associate any being with Him Fear and revere Him as He ought to be feared and revered Be true unto Him by saying always the best than can

be said. Love one another in the spirit of Allah. Allah is displeased whenever His covenant is violated." By this and like exhortations, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) used to counsel his companions and preach to the people in his mosque, leaning against one of the date trunks supporting the ceiling. Later on, he ordered a pulpit of three steps to be made for him, the first to stand upon when delivering a sermon and the second to sit down upon.

Muslim Brotherhood

The brotherhood which Muhammad (P.B.U.H) made the cornerstone of Islamic civilization did not rest on his preachings alone. It was embodied in its highest perfection in his deeds and concrete example. True, he was the Prophet of Allah, but he consistently refused to adopt any of the appearances of power, authority, kingship, or temporal sovereignty. He emphatically repeated to his companions, "Do not praise me as the Christians have praised the son of Mary, for I am but the servant of Allah. Rather, call me the servant of Allah and His Prophet (P.B.U.H)." Once, he arrived at a gathering of his companions leaning on a stick and they all rose up in respect for him. He said, "Do not stand up for me as the Persians do in aggrandizement of one another." Whenever he joined his companions, he always sat at the edge of the space they occupied. He used to joke and mix with them, to talk to them about their own affairs, to pamper and coddle their children, and to answer the call of freeman, slave, maid servant and destitute alike. He used to visit the sick in the farthest district of Madinah, to take the initiative in greeting whomever he met, and to stretch his hand in welcome to his visitors. No man came to visit Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and found him in prayer but he shortened his prayer, attended to his visitor and returned to his prayer after the visitor had left. He was the

most charitable of people, always smiling in the face of everyone except when Revelation came to him or when he delivered a speech or a sermon. In his home, he felt no superiority over the members of his family. He washed his own robe and mended it by his own hand. He milked his own goat, repaired his own sandals, attended to himself and to his camel, ate with his servant, and fulfilled the request of the weak, the oppressed and the destitute. Whenever he found somebody in need, however lowly or plebeian, he preferred to attend to him first rather than to himself or to his family. That is why he never saved anything for the morrow, and when he died his shield was in possession of a Jewish pawnbroker as lien for a loan made to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to spend on his family. He was exceedingly modest and extremely loyal. When a deputation from the Negus of Abyssinia arrived to see him, he rose to serve them. His companions sought to stop him, but he said to them: "The Abyssinians were kind to our companions when they went to their country; I would like to treat them likewise and reward them." He was so loyal to Khadijah that whenever she was mentioned he gave her the best of praises so that 'A'ishah used to say, "I have never been jealous of a woman as I have been of Khadijah for all that I have heard the Prophet (P.B.U.H) praise her." Once when a woman came to him, he rose to greet her, spoke to her gently, and attended to her pleas; people asked him who she was. He answered, "She used to befriend us in the days of Khadijah; loyalty to one's friends is of the faith." Indeed, he was so compassionate and gentle that he did not mind his grandsons' playing with him during his prayer. Once, he even prayed while Umāmah, his granddaughter through Zaynab, sat on his shoulders and had to be put down when he prostrated himself.

Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) Kindness to Animals

His kindness and mercy, on which he founded the new

Islamic civilization, were not limited to man alone but extended to animals. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) used to rise and open the door for a cat seeking to enter. He attended with his own hands to a sick rooster and rubbed down his own horse with his own sleeve. When 'A'ishah rode on an obstinate camel and began to pull him hardly, he said to her, "Softly and gently please." Thus his kindness and mercy embraced all that ever came in touch with him—every creature that sought to stand near his person.

The Brotherhood of Justice and Mercy

Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) mercy did not proceed from weakness or servility, nor was it ever vitiated by pride, haughtiness, or the expectation of gratitude. It was done purely for the sake of Allah. Hence, nothing was excluded from it. This kindness differentiates the foundation of the civilization of Islam from all other civilizations. Islam puts justice side by side with kindness and judges that kindness is not kindness without justice.

﴿ فَمَنِ ٱعۡتَدَىٰ عَلَيۡكُمۡ فَٱعۡتَدُواْ عَلَيۡهِ بِمِثۡلِ مَا ٱعۡتَدَىٰ عَلَيۡكُمۡۚ ﴾

سورة البقرة آية ١٩٤

(If then any one transgresses the prohibition against you, transgress you likewise against him)

(Al-Baqarah: 194)

﴿ وَلَكُمۡ فِي ٱلۡقِصَاصِ حَيَوٰةٞ يَٰٓأُوْلِي ٱلۡأَلۡبَٰبِ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَتَّقُونَ ﴾

سورة البقرة آية ١٧٩

(In the Law of Equality there is (saving of) Life to you, O you men of understanding; that you may restrain yourselves.) (Al-Baqarah: 179)

Kindness is felicitous and the good deeds that issue from it are praiseworthy only when the motivation is internal, the will is free, and the purpose is the seeking of Allah's sake alone. Kindness should proceed from a strong soul that has known no submission to anything but Allah, has not succumbed to weakness, does not go to extremes in the name of piety, and knows no fear or contrition except on account for a misdeed it has done or a crime it has committed. As long as the soul is under alien dominion, it can never be strong; it can never be strong, either, if it stands under the dominion of its own passions and desires. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his companions emigrated from Makkah precisely in rebellion against the dominion of Quraysh who attempted to weaken their souls by means of dominion and the injuries it perpetrates. On the other hand, the soul is said to be under the dominion of passions and desires whenever the body's demands take precedence over those of the spirit, when passion vanquishes reason, when external life exerts any power over internal life—in short, when the soul does not know that it has no need of either passion or desire and is really their final master.

Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) Power to Surmount Life

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) provided the highest example of the power to overcome life. He achieved such a degree of mastery over life that he did not hesitate to give all that he had whenever he wanted to give. A contemporary of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) once said of him, "Muhammad (P.B.U.H) gives as if he has no fear of want at all." In order not to allow anything to exercise

any power over him but rather to enable himself to determine it, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) led a very ascetic life. Despite his strong desire to know the secrets of life and understand its structure, he was quite contemptuous of its joys and attractions. He slept in a bed of palm fibers; he never ate his fill; he never ate barley bread on two consecutive days, gruel being his main daily meal together with dates. Neither he nor his family had ever had enough *tharid, He felt* the pangs of hunger more than once, and learned to press a stone against his stomach as a means to silence those pangs. This remarkable restraint, however, did not prevent his enjoying the delicacies of Allah's bounty if such were available, and he was known to love to eat leg of lamb, squash, honey, and other sweets.

In his dress he was as ascetic as he was in his food. His wife once gave him a new robe because he was in need of one. One of his companions asked him for something with which to shroud a dead relative, and Muhammad (P.B.U.H) gave him the new robe he had just received. His wardrobe consisted of shirts and robes made out of wool, cotton, or linen. But on special occasions he had no objection to wearing a luxurious robe from Yaman should it be called for. He used to wear a simple sandal, and he did not wear slippers until the Negus of Abyssinia sent him some together with other clothes.

Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) denial of the world and its luxuries was not pursued for its own sake. Nor was it a duty imposed by religion. The Qur'ān said:

﴿ كُلُوا۟ مِن طَيِّبَـٰتِ مَا رَزَقْنَـٰكُمْ ﴾ سورة البقرة آية ٥٧

(Eat of the good things We have provided for you)
(Al-Baqarah: 57)

and

﴿ وَٱبْتَغِ فِيمَآ ءَاتَىٰكَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلدَّارَ ٱلْءَاخِرَةَ ۖ وَلَا تَنسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ وَأَحْسِن كَمَآ أَحْسَنَ ٱللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ ﴾

سورة القصص آية ٧٧

("But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on you, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget thy portion in this World: but do thou good, as Allah has been good to you) (Al-Qasas: 77)

In the traditions of the early Muslims it is said, "Work for this world as if your life in it is eternal; work for the other world as if you were - to die tomorrow." Certainly Muhammad (P.B.U.H) sought to give mankind the highest possible example of a mastery of life absolutely free of weakness, in which no goods, wealth, or power dedicated to another being beside Allah could have any effect. When brotherhood is based upon such a power over life and its attractions issue into such exemplary deeds as Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had done, it is pure, candid, and has no other object whatever besides the lofty fraternalism of man and man. In it, justice dovetails with mercy, and the subject is not determined except by his own free and deliberate judgment. Islam places both mercy and forgiveness side by side with justice. It insists that if they are to be themselves at all, mercy and forgiveness must issue from power. Only then will their purpose be the genuine good of the neighbor and his reconstruction.

The Sunnah of Muhammad (P.B.U.H)

The foundation for a new civilization which Muhammad (P.B.U.H) laid down was expressed very succinctly in a report

by 'Ali ibn Abu Talib. He asked the Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H) concerning his Sunnah, and the latter replied: "Wisdom is my capital, reason the force of my religion, love my foundation, longing my vehicle, the remembrance of Allah my constant pleasure, trust my treasure, mourning my companion, knowledge my arm, patience my robe, contentment my booty, poverty my pride, asceticism my profession, conviction my strength, truthfulness my intercessor, obedience my argument, holy war my ethics, prayer my supreme pleasure."

Beginning of Jewish Fears

Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) teachings, example, and leadership had the deepest effect upon the people. Large numbers of men joined the ranks of Islam and their conversion consolidated and increased Muslim power in Madinah. It was at this stage that the Jews began to rethink their position ***vis-â-vis*** Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his companions. They had concluded a pact with him and were still ambitiously hoping to win him over to their side in order to increase their power against the Christians. Muhammad (P.B.U.H), however, was becoming more powerful than both Christians and Jews, and his command was growing in effect and application. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had even begun thinking of Quraysh, of their banishment of him and the Muhājirūn from Makkah, and of their forced conversion of some Muslims to the old idolatry. It was at this time that the Jews asked themselves whether they should let his call, spiritual power, and authority continue to spread while remaining satisfied with the security they enjoyed under his protection and the increased trade and wealth which his peace had brought to their city. Perhaps they might have done so had they felt certain that his religion was not going to spread in their midst and their own men would not abjure the exclusivism of Jewish

prophethood and the people of Israel to convert to Islam. A great number of their priesthood and a learned rabbi, 'Abdullah ibn Salām, approached the Prophetn (P.B.U.H) and announced to him his conversion as well as that of his own household. 'Abdullah himself feared the calumny of the Jews and their defamation of him should they learn of his conversion. He therefore asked the Prophet (P.B.U.H) to inquire of them about him, before any of the Jews had learned of his conversion. The Jews answered Muhammad (P.B.U.H), "'Abdullah ibn Salām is our master, son of our master, our priest, and learned rabbi." When, however. 'Abdullah went back to them as a Muslim and called them to Islam, they attacked him and spread in the Jewish quarters of Madinah all sorts of calumnies against him. This was the event which triggered their suspicions of Muhammad (P.B.U. H) and their denial of Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) prophethood. Those members of al Aws and a] Khazraj tribes who never entered Islam or who did so in hypocrisy or for an ulterior purpose were quick to rally around the Jews once their opposition to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and to Islam began to crystallize.

The War of controversy between Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and the Jews

A war of words between Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and the Jews, which proved to be greater and more sinister than that which raged between Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and Quraysh, followed ibn Salām' s conversion. Unlike the hostility with Quraysh, the new war in Yathrib witnessed the connivance of treason, deception, and scriptural knowledge for the attack against Muhammad (P.B.U.H), his message, and his companions, whether Muhājirun or Ansār. The Jews sent some of their rabbis to feign conversion to Islam in order to enter

Muslim ranks and councils. While showing all piety, these rabbis were commissioned to disseminate doubt and suspicion of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) among his own people. They asked Muhammad (P.B.U.H) questions which they thought might shake the Muslims' conviction and arouse doubt in the message Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was teaching. A number of hypocrites from aI Aws and al Khazraj tribes joined Islam for the same purpose. Both Jews and unbelievers, however, reached such levels of deception that they denied either Torah or Allah in order to ask Muhammad (P.B.U.H), "If Allah created creation, who then created Allah?" Muhammad (P.B.U.H) used to answer them with the divine verses:

﴿ قُلْ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ ٱللَّهُ ٱلصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُۥ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌۢ ۝ ﴾ سورة الإخلاص الآيات ١-٤

(Say: He is Allah, the One Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begets not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him.) (Al-Ikhlas: 1-4)

The Muslims soon detected their purpose and uncovered their attempts. When some of them plotting in secrecy in one of the mosque's corners were discovered one day by the Muslims, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had to command that they be expelled from the mosque. However, their efforts to split Muslim ranks continued. A Jewish leader called Shās ibn Qays passed one day by a group of al Aws and al Khazraj tribesmen enjoying one another's company in good harmony. He remembered how they were once divided and warring against each other, and thought that should the Bannñ Qaylah remain united in this territory the Jews would not be able to live in peace for long. He therefore instructed a young Jew who frequented their sessions to seek an

opportunity to arouse memories of the Day of Bu'āth when al Aws vanquished al Khazraj. The youth did speak and recalled the memory of that war and succeeded in arousing the old pride and hatred of the two tribes, convincing some that a return to that *dies nefastus* was possible as well as desirable. When Muhammad (P.B.U.H) learned of this, he hurried with his companions and reminded the divisive elements how Islam had sweetened their hearts and made of them mutually loving brethren. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) continued to talk to them, emphasizing their Islamic unity and brotherhood until their tears ran down in emotion and they embraced one another.

The war of words between Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and the Jews increased in intensity. The evidence therefor is what the Qur'ān has to say about it. The first eighty-one verses of ***Surah*** "al Nisa'," mention the people of the book, their denial of their own scripture, and condemn their unbelief and denial in strong terms:

﴿ وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنۢ بَعْدِهِۦ بِٱلرُّسُلِ ۖ وَءَاتَيْنَا
عِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَأَيَّدْنَٰهُ بِرُوحِ ٱلْقُدُسِ ۗ أَفَكُلَّمَا جَآءَكُمْ
رَسُولٌۢ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَىٰٓ أَنفُسُكُمُ ٱسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَرِيقًا كَذَّبْتُمْ وَفَرِيقًا
تَقْتُلُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَقَالُوا۟ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌۢ ۚ بَل لَّعَنَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلًا مَّا
يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ كِتَٰبٌ مِّنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ
وَكَانُوا۟ مِن قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُم مَّا
عَرَفُوا۟ كَفَرُوا۟ بِهِۦ ۚ فَلَعْنَةُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَى ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾ ﴾

سورة البقرة الآيات ٨٧-٨٩

(We gave Moses the Book and followed him up with a succession of Messengers; We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, Clear (Signs) and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit. Is it that whenever there comes to you a Messenger with what you yourselves desire not, you are puffed up with pride? Some you called impostors, and others you slay! They say: "Our hearts are the wrappings (which preserve Allah's Word: we need no more)." Nay, Allah's curse is on them for their blasphemy: little is it they believe. And when there comes to them a Book from Allah, confirming what is with them - although from of old they had prayed for victory against those without Faith - when there comes to them that which they (should) have recognized. They refused to believe in it. But the curse of Allah is on those without Faith.) (Al-Baqarah: 87-89)

The Story of Finhās

Sometimes, controversy and argument between Jews and Muslims reached such a level of intensity that the participants attacked each other. In order to appreciate how provocative the Jews were in their war of words against the Muslims, suffice it to remember the story of Finhās. The gentleness, patience, and *largeur de coeur* of Abu Bakr are proverbial. And yet he too could and did lose his temper. He once talked to Finhās calling the latter unto Islam. Finhās answered, "By Allah, 0 Abū Bakr, we do not need Allah. Rather, it is He who needs us. It is not I who pray to Him, it is He who prays to us. We are self-sufficient and He is not. If Allah were self-sufficient, He would not borrow our wealth as your Prophet claims (P.B.U.H). If He were truly not in need of us, He would not have prohibited usury to you and allowed it to us." Finhas was actually referring to the Qur'ānic verse which said:

﴿ مَّن ذَا ٱلَّذِى يُقْرِضُ ٱللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَٰعِفَهُۥ لَهُۥٓ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً ﴾ سورة البقرة آية ٢٤٥

(Who is he that will loan to Allah a beautiful loan, which Allah will double unto his credit and multiply many times?) (Al-Baqarah: 245)

At this point in the conversation, Abū Bakr lost his patience and struck Finhās on the face saying, "By Allah, were it not for the covenant between your people and mine, I would have struck your head off, 0 enemy of Allah." The said Finhās took his complaint to the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and denied his blasphemy. It was then that this verse was revealed:

﴿ لَّقَدْ سَمِعَ ٱللَّهُ قَوْلَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَآءُ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَالُوا۟ وَقَتْلَهُمُ ٱلْأَنۢبِيَآءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَنَقُولُ ذُوقُوا۟ عَذَابَ ٱلْحَرِيقِ ﴾ سورة آل عمران آية ١٨١

(Allah hath heard the taunt of those who say: "Truly, Allah is indigent and we are rich!" We shall certainly record their word and (their act) of slaying the Prophets in defiance of right, and we shall say: "Taste the chastisement of the Scorching Fire!) (Al-Imran: 181)

Not satisfied with their attempt to divide the Muhājirūn and Ansār, al Aws and al Khazraj, in order to dissuade the Muslims from their religion and return them to idolatry—without ever seeking to convert them to Judaism—the Jews even tried to trap Muhammad himself (P.B.U.H). A number of their rabbis, elders,

and noblemen went to him one day and said: "You know who we are and you know well our prestige with our people. You know that if we should follow you, the Jews would do likewise. Would you then not help us against our people by giving a verdict in our favor when we bring to you our litigation with them to arbitrate? If you do, we shall then follow you and believe in you. At this the following Divine words were revealed:

﴿ وَأَنِ ٱحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَآءَهُمْ وَٱحْذَرْهُمْ أَن يَفْتِنُوكَ عَنۢ بَعْضِ مَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ ۖ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا۟ فَٱعْلَمْ أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ أَن يُصِيبَهُم بِبَعْضِ ذُنُوبِهِمْ ۗ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ ٱلنَّاسِ لَفَـٰسِقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ أَفَحُكْمَ ٱلْجَـٰهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ ۚ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ ﴾

سورة المائدة الآيات ٤٩ـ٥٠

(And this (He commands): judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and follow not their vain desires, but beware of them lest they beguile you from any of that (teaching) which Allah hath sent down to you. And if they turn away, be assured that for some of their crimes it is Allah's purpose to punish them. And truly most men are rebellious. Do they then seek after a judgment of (the Days of) Ignorance? But who, for a people whose faith is assured, can give better judgment than Allah?)

(Al-Ma'idah: 49-50)

Orientation to the Ka'bah in Prayer

By this time, the Jews had lost their patience and began to plot against Muhammad (P.B.U.H). They sought to get him to

leave Madinah as the Quraysh had succeeded in causing him and his companions to leave Makkah. Their method, however, was different. They said to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) that each and every prophet hitherto had gone to Jerusalem and there established his residence. They challenged him by asserting that if he were a true prophet, he would only do as his predecessors had done in considering Madinah only as an intermediate station between Makkah and the city where al Aqsa Mosque stood. Muhammad (P.B.U.H), however, did not have to think hard to realize that they were plotting against him. It was then, seventeen months after his emigration from Makkah, that Allah commanded him to orient himself in prayer toward the holy mosque, the house of Ibrahim and Isma'il. It was then that the verse was revealed:

﴿ قَدْ نَرَىٰ تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي ٱلسَّمَآءِ ۖ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَىٰهَا ۚ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ ۚ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنتُمْ فَوَلُّوا۟ وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُۥ ۗ ﴾ سورة البقرة آية ١٤٤

(We see the turning of your face (for guidance) to the heavens: now shall we turn you to a Qibla that shall please you. Turn then your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque: wherever you are, turn your faces in that direction.) (Al-Baqarah: 144)

The Jews condemned Muhammad (P.B.U.H) for this and sought to trap him once more. They went to him pleading that they would all enter into his faith if he would but return to Jerusalem, his old direction in prayer. In this connection, Allah Revealed the following verses:

﴿ ۞ سَيَقُولُ ٱلسُّفَهَآءُ مِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَا وَلَّىٰهُمْ عَن قِبْلَتِهِمُ ٱلَّتِى كَانُوا۟ عَلَيْهَا ۚ قُل لِّلَّهِ ٱلْمَشْرِقُ وَٱلْمَغْرِبُ ۚ يَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَٰكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِّتَكُونُوا۟ شُهَدَآءَ عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ ٱلرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا ٱلْقِبْلَةَ ٱلَّتِى كُنتَ عَلَيْهَآ إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَن يَتَّبِعُ ٱلرَّسُولَ مِمَّن يَنقَلِبُ عَلَىٰ عَقِبَيْهِ ۚ وَإِن كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ هَدَى ٱللَّهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ ٱللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَٰنَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِٱلنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾ ﴾ سورة البقرة آية ١٤٢ ـ ١٤٣

(The Fools among the people will say: "What has turned them from the Qibla to which they were used?" Say: To Allah belong east and west: He guides whom He will to a way that is straight. Thus have We made of you an Ummat justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves; and we appointed the Qibla to which you were used, only to test those who followed the Messenger from those who would turn on their heels (from the Faith). Indeed it was (a change) momentous, except to those guided by Allah. And never would Allah make your faith of no effect. For Allah is to all people most surely full of Kindness, Most Merciful.)

(Al-Baqarah: 142-143)

The Christian Delegation from Najrān

While the war of words was raging between Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and the Jews in full intensity, a delegation from the Christians of Najrān consisting of sixty riders arrived in Madinah. Among them were some of the nobles, learned men, and religious leaders of the tribe whom the emperors of Byzantium had been protecting, encouraging, financing, and assisting in the building of churches. Perhaps this delegation arrived in Madinah after they learned of the conflict between Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and the Jews with the hope of adding fuel to the fire so that neighboring Christendom, whether in al Sham or in Yaman, might relax and feel safe from Jewish plots and Arab aggression. The three scriptural religions thus confronted one another in Madinah. The delegation entered with the Prophet (P.B.U.H) into public debate and these were soon joined by the Jews, thus resulting in a tripartite dialogue between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The Jews were obstinately denying the prophethood of Jesus as well as of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), as we have seen earlier, and pretending that Ezra was the son of God. The Christians were defending trinitarianjsm and the divinity of Jesus. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was calling men to recognize the unity of Allah and the spiritual unity of mankind. Most Jews and Christians asked Muhammad (P.B.U.H) which prophets he believed in. He answered:

﴿ قُولُوٓا۟ ءَامَنَّا بِٱللَّهِ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسْمَـٰعِيلَ وَإِسْحَـٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَٱلْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَآ أُوتِىَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَآ أُوتِىَ ٱلنَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُۥ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴾

سورة البقرة آية ١٣٦

(Say "We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord: we make no difference between one and another of them: and we submit to Allah)

(Al-Baqarah: 136)

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) criticized both Jews and Christians in very strong terms for their compromise of the monotheistic faith that Allah is one, for tampering with the words of Allah in their scriptures, and for interpreting them in ways violating the understanding of the prophets whose prophethood they themselves acknowledged.

He criticized them for asserting that the Revelation of Jesus, Moses, and their predecessors in prophethood differed in many essential matters from his own Revelation. In support of this, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) argued that what those prophets had received from Allah was the same eternal truth as that revealed to him. Being the truth, its light shines forth clear and distinct, and its content is majestic and simple to any researcher submitting to none but God and to anyone capable of seeing the world as a connected and integrated unity rather than as ephemeral intimations of desire, passion, and ulterior motives. Being the truth, it must be readily recognized by the man liberated from blind submission to old wives' tales or to the sanctified legends of the fathers and ancestors. By nature, such truth must be open and possible for everyone to perceive.

Congress on the Three Religions

This was a truly great congress which the city of Yathrib had

witnessed. In it, the three religions which today dominate the world and determine its destiny had met, and they did so for the greatest idea and the noblest purpose. It had neither political nor economic aims, but stood beyond the materialistic objectives which our present world is anxiously, yet so vainly trying to realize. The objective of the congress was purely spiritual. Whereas in the case of Christianity and Judaism the spiritual objective was backed or motivated by political, capitalistic, and worldly ambitions, Muhammad's spiritual (P.B.U.H) purpose was pure and advocated for the sake of humanity as a whole. It was Allah that gave this purpose of Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) its form, and this same form was proclaimed not only to the Jews but to the Christians and all mankind. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was commanded to address the delegates of both faiths,

﴿ قُلْ يَـٰٓأَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ تَعَالَوْا۟ إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٍ سَوَآءٍۭ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِۦ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا۟ فَقُولُوا۟ ٱشْهَدُوا۟ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ ﴾

سورة آل عمران آية ٦٤

(Say: "O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah." If then they turn back, say "Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah's Will) (Al-Imran: 64)

Withdrawal of the Christian Delegation

What can Jews, Christians, or any other people say of this

call to worship none but Allah, to associate none with Him and never to take one another as lords besides Allah? The spirit which is sincere and truthful, which is endowed with reason and candid emotion cannot but believe in this call and in it alone. But human life is not entirely dominated by such noble dispositions. There is yet the materialistic consideration. Man is indeed weak; and it is this inclination to material gain which causes him to subject himself to the dominion of another man for material advantage. Man suffers terribly from false pride, his considerateness; self-respect and reason are destroyed thereby. It was this materialistic ambition for wealth, worldly prestige and social eminence that caused Abū Hārithah, the most learned of the people of Najran, to tell a friend of his that he was perfectly convinced of the truth of which Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was teaching. When that friend asked him why he did not then convert to Islam, he answered: "I cannot do so on account of what my people have done to me. They have honored, financed, and respected me; and they insist on differing from him. Should I follow him, they would take away from me all this that I now have."

It was to this message that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) summoned Jews and Christians alike. Muslim relationships with the former were already under the governance of the Covenant of Madlnah. Those of the latter depended upon the Christians' response to Muhammad's invitation (P.B.U.H). Though they did not join Islam at this time, the Christians resolved neither to oppose Muhammad (P.B.U.H) nor the missionary activity of his followers. Appreciating the perfect justice of Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) new order, they asked him to appoint for them a Muslim to act as judge in their own disputes at home. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) sent with them Abū 'Ubaydah ibn al Jarrah, who was vested with the proper judicial authority.

Rethinking the Problem of Quraysh and Makkah

Muhammad (P.B.U.H) continued to consolidate the civilization for which his teaching and example provided the foundation. Together with his Muhajirun companions, he thought over the problem of Quraysh, which had vexed them ever since their emigration.

The Muslims were moved by many considerations. In Makkah stood the Ka'bah, the house of Ibrahim, pilgrimage center to them as well as to all the Arabs. Until their exile, they had performed this sacred duty in season, every year. In Makkah too many of their friends, relatives, and loved ones had stayed behind and were still practicing the old idolatry. In Makkah, their wealth, worldly goods, trade, and properties were still under the jurisdiction of the Quraysh. Madinah itseh was struck with epidemic diseases which attacked the Muslims and inflicted upon them great suffering; indeed, the very trip to Madinah on foot and without provisions had so worn them out that they entered the city on their first arrival already diseased and exhausted. This hard journey had naturally increased their longing for their hometown. Moreover, they did not leave Makkah of their own accord but under compulsion and full of resentment for their overlords who threatened them with all kinds of punishments and sanctions. It was not in their nature to suffer such injustices or to submit to such tyranny for long without thinking of avenging themselves. Besides these determinants, there was the natural motivation of longing to return to one's homeland, to one's home where one was born and grew up. There was the natural longing for the land, the plain, and the mountains, the water and the vegetation, all of which had constituted their earliest associations, friendships, and love. The land in which he grows and to which he returns at the end of his life has a special appeal for man. It determines his heart and his emotion and moves him to defend it with all his power and

wealth as well as to exert all possible effort—indeed his life—for its guardianship and well being. It is to the land from which we came out, as it were, that we want to return and be buried in at death. This natural feeling added a degree of intensity to the other emotions. Indeed, the Muhajirun could never forget Makkah nor stop thinking about the problem of their relation with the Quraysh. From the very nature of the case, and after thirteen long years of persecution and conflict in which they held their ground firmly, the Muslims could not possibly entertain any ideas of withdrawal or giving up. The religion itself to which they had converted and for the sake of which they had emigrated did not approve of weakness, despair, servile submission, or the patient bearing of injustice. Although it was strongly opposed to aggression and condemned it in no uncertain terms, and although it called for and promoted fraternity and brotherhood, it demanded that man rise up to the defense of his person, of his dignity, of the freedom of religion, and the freedom of homeland. It was for this defense and purpose that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) concluded with the Muslims of Yathrib the great covenant of al 'Aqabah. Now the question posed itself: how may the Muhajirun fulfill this duty imposed upon them for the sake of Allah, His holy house, and their beloved homeland, Makkah? Toward the realization of this objective will the policy of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and of the Muslims now turn. This objective was to preoccupy them all until the conquest of Makkah had been achieved, and the religion of Allah, and the truth which it proclaimed, had become supreme.



12

The First Raids and Skirmishes

Muslim Policy in Madinah

The Muslims were all well settled in Madinah only months after the Hijrah. Their longing for Makkah increased with every new day, as they thought of their loved ones whom they had left behind, of their property and wealth which they had forsaken, and of the injuries which the Quraysh had inflicted upon them in the past. What they would now do was for them a constant question. The majority of historians think that the Muslims, led by Muhammad (P.B.U.H), thought of avenging themselves on the Quraysh and of declaring, war against them. Some even claim that the Muslims had thought of declaring this war ever since they arrived in Madinah, and that if they had not opened hostilities at that time it was because they were preoccupied with the business of settling down and organizing their own lives. They reasoned that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had concluded the great covenant of al 'Aqabah precisely in order to wage war against all opponents and that it was natural for his and his

companions' attention first to fall upon the Quraysh—a fact proven by Quraysh's own mobilization upon hearing of the conclusion of the said pact.

The First Raids

This general hypothesis of the historians is supposedly proved by events which took place eight months after the Hijrah of Muhammad (P.B.U.H). The Prophet (P.B.U.H) then sent his uncle Hamzah ibn 'Abd al Muttalib with forty riders from the Muhājirūn, rather than the Ansār, to the seacoast near al 'Is where Aba Jahl ibn Hishām was camping with three hundred Makkan riders. Hamzah was just about to enter into battle with the Quraysh force when Majdiy ibn 'Amr al Juhani, who was in peaceful relation with both parties, interfered to separate them before the battle had begun. At the same time, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) sent 'Ubaydah ibn al Hārith with sixty riders from the Muhājirīn to go to a well in the valley of Rabigh in Hijāz where they met more than two hundred riders led by Aba Sufyān. The Muslim forces withdrew without engaging the enemy, except for the report that Sa'd ibn Abū Waqqās shot one single arrow, later to be called, 'the first arrow shot in the cause of Islam.' It is also reported that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had sent Sa'd ibn Abū Waqqas to lead a number of Muhājirīn riders (eight according to one version and twenty according to another) into the Hijāz, but he returned without engaging the enemy.

Raids Led by the Prophet (P.B.U.H)

As further evidence to all the foregoing it is said that the Prophet (P.B.U.H) himself had undertaken the leadership of the raids on al Abwā' twelve months after the Hijrah and appointed Sa'd ibn 'Ubādah as his vice-regent in Madinah during his

absence. In their search for the Quraysh as well as the Banū Damrah, the Muslims reached Waddān. They did not meet any man from Quraysh on that expedition, but they did succeed in winning Banū Damrah as allies. A month later, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) led a force of two hundred riders from both the Muhājirūn and Ansār camps with Buwāt as their objective, where a caravan of 1,500 camels accompanied by one hundred riders under the leadership of Umayyah ibn Khalaf was reported to be passing. No engagement took place because the caravan had taken an untrodden, unknown route. Two or three months after Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) return from Buwāt by way of Radwā, he appointed Abū Salamah ibn 'Abd al Asad to take his place in Madinah while he and more than two hundred Muslim riders went on an expedition to 'Ushayrah in the district of Yanbu'. There he spent the whole month of First Jumādā and a few days of Second Jumādā of the second year A.H. (October ***623*** C.E.) waiting for a Quraysh caravan headed by Abū Sufyān to pass, without success, for it had already gone earlier. During his stay in the area, he concluded a pact of friendship with the tribe of Banā Mudlaj and their allies from Banu Damrah. He had hardly spent ten days in Madinah after his return when Kurz ibn Jābir al Fihri, an ally of Quraysh, raided the camels and cattle of Madinah. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) immediately led a force after him, appointing Zayd ibn Hārithah as his representative during his absence. The force marched until it reached a valley called Safawān in the district of Badr and again missed their objective, the said Kurz ibn Jābir al Fihri. It is to this raid that biographers refer as the first raid of Badr.

The Historians' View of the First Raid

Does not all this constitute evidence that the Muhājirīn as well as Muhammad (P.B.U.H) sought first of all to avenge

themselves on the Quraysh and to open hostilities against them? There is full evidence, according to these historians, that for these expeditions and raids the Muslims had two objectives: first to seize the caravans of the Quraysh, on their way to or from al Sham during the summer, in order to take possession of the goods which they carried; second to cut off the Quraysh caravan routes to ***Al Sham.*** This latter goal was to be achieved by concluding covenants and pacts with the various tribes settled along these routes. Thus, it would be all the easier and safer for the Muhājirun to attack these caravans without fear of detection or attack from the local inhabitants, and the caravans themselves would then be at the total mercy of the Muslims. The raids which the Prophet (P.B.U.H) sent out under the leadership of Hamzah, ‘Ubaydah ibn al Hārith, and Sa‘d ibn Abū Waqqas, as well as the pacts of friendship and peace which he concluded with Banū Damrah, Banū Mudlaj, and others, confirmed this second objective and proved that the Muslims had definitely amied at cutting the road to al Sham for the Quraysh and Makkah.

Our View of These Raids

That by means of these raids, begun six months after their settlement in Madinah and undertaken by the Muhājirun alone, the Muslims sought to wage war against Quraysh and to attack its caravans is an opinion which cannot be accepted without hesitation and scrutiny. The expedition of Hamzah did not consist of more than thirty men, that of ‘Ubaydah, sixty, that of Sa’d eight, according to one version, and twenty according to another. The number of fighters assigned by the Quraysh to the protection of their caravan was in each case many times the number of riders the Muslims had sent out. Moreover, ever since Muhammad (P.B.U.H) emigrated to Madinah and began to forge a chain of alliances around the city, the Quraysh multiplied the

number of escorts for their caravans and improved their weapons. Whatever the personal courage of Hamzah, 'Ubaydah, and Sa'd among the leaders of those expeditionary forces of the Muhājirīn, their military equipment was not such as would encourage them to make war. They were satisfied with threatening the Quraysh rather than engaging them in battle. The only exception to this was the single arrow shot by Sa'd, as reported above.

Exposure of Quraysh's Trade to Danger

The caravans of Quraysh were protected by escorts of the people of Makkah who were related to many Muhajirin as members of the same tribe, the same house and clan, and often the same family. It was not easy, therefore, for them to decide to enter into an engagement in which members of the same tribe, clan, and family would kill one another and then expose to retaliation all their fellow tribesmen on each side, in fact to expose the whole of Makkah and Madinah at once to the ***lex talionis*** of the desert. Hardly any change affected the inability and unwillingness of Muslims and others to launch a civil war which both parties had ably struggled to avert for thirteen long years, from the commission of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to prophethood to the day of his emigration to Madinah. The Muslims knew too well that the covenant of al 'Aqabah was a defensive one which both al Aws and al Khazraj had undertaken to protect Muhammad (P.B.U.H). These tribes of Madinah have never agreed either with Muhammad (P.B.U.H) nor with anyone else to commit aggression on anyone. It is not possible, therefore, to accept the view of the earliest historians, who did not begin to write the history of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) until two centuries or so after his death, that the first raids and expeditions had actually been intended for fighting. Hence, we must

understand these events in a more reasonable way to harmonize with what we know to have been the policy of the Muslims in this early period of Madinah, and to be consistent with the Prophet's (P.B.U.H) policy of common understand-ing, mutual friendship, and co-operation to obtain religious freedom for all. It is more likely, therefore, that these early expeditions had only psychic objectives, and were meant to press home to the Quraysh the realization that their own interest demanded that they come into some kind of understanding with the Muslims. The Muslims were, after all, their own people, compelled to migrate from their own city to escape the persecution so far inflicted. Rather than to bring war and hostility, these expeditions were intended to put an end to the old hostility, to guarantee to the Muslims the freedom they sought for calling men to their religion, and to ensure for Makkah the security it needed for its caravans to al Sham. This trade, in which both Makkah and Ta'if were involved and which Makkah used to carry on with the south as well as with the north, had built up large interests and businesses. Some caravans consisted of two thousand camels or more, and carried a load whose value amounted to fifty thousand DInārs.' According to the estimates of the Orientalist, Sprenger, the annual exports of Makkah amounted to 250,000 Dinārs or 160,000 gold pounds. If the Quraysh could be made to realize that this precious trade and wealth were exposed to danger by their own sons who had migrated to Madinah, perhaps they might be inclined to reach an understanding with the Muslims in order to grant them the freedóm to preach their faith, visit Makkah, and perform the pilgrimage, which was all they really sought. Such an understanding was not possible, however, unless the Quraysh were brought to realize that their emigrant sons were capable of impeding that trade and inflicting some material harm. To my mind, this explains the return of Hamzah and his riders without battle after their encounter with Abū Jahl ibn Hishām on the sea-coast when Majdiy ibn 'Amr al Juhani intervened between him

and the Quraysh. It also explains the fact of the small numbers of riders which the Muslims sent on these expeditions in the direction of the trade routes of Makkah. Otherwise, it would be unreasonable that the Muslims go out to war in such small numbers. This also explains Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) alliances of peace which he concluded with the tribes settled along the routes of these caravans while Quraysh persisted in its hostility toward the Muhājirūn. Apparently, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had hoped that the news of these alliances would reach the Quraysh and cause them to reconsider their position and, perhaps, open the road to some understanding.

Al Ansār and Offensive Invasion

The foregoing hypothesis is corroborated by a very reliable tradition to the effect that when the Prophet (P.B.U.H) went with his men to Buwāt and to al 'Ushayrah, a great number of Ansār from Madinah accompanied him. These Ansār had covenanted with him for his protection, not in order to launch any offensive attack against anyone. This point will become clear when we study the great battle of Badr. There, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) hesitated whether or not to permit the fighting to take place until the people of Madinah had clearly agreed to join that specific sortie. Although the Ansār saw no violation of their covenant with Muhammad (P.B.U.H) if the latter entered into other covenants of peace and friendship, they were not thereby committed to join him in a war against Makkah which no Arab morality or custom would approve. The effect of the alliances which Muhammad (P.B.U.H) concluded with the tribes settled along the trade route was surely that of endangering Makkan trade. But how far removed is such an attempt from declaring and entering into a full scale war! We may conclude, therefore, that the views that Hamzah, 'Ubaydah ibn al Hārith, and Sa'd

ibn Abū Waqqas were sent to fight the Quraysh, and that their expeditions should be called military raids, are unsound and unacceptable. Likewise, the view that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) had gone to al Abwā, Buwāt, and al 'Ushayrah for purposes of war is refuted by the considerations we have just given. The fact that such a view is held by the historians of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) does not constitute a sound argument because the said historians did not write until toward the end of the second century A.H. Furthermore, the said historians were looking at these events as they occurred after the great battle of Badr. Hence, they looked upon them as preliminary skirmishes. preceding that great battle and leading toward it It was a natural mistake for them to add these sorties to the list of battles the Muslims fought during the Prophet's lifetime (P.B.U.H).

Nature of the Madinese

A large number of Orientalists have perceived these facts and realized their opposition to the said claim, although they did not expressly say so in their works. We are moved to accredit them with this realization despite their following the Muslim historians in their general attribution to Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and the Muhājirūn of the intention to make war against Makkah from the first days of residence in Madinah. They point out that these early expeditions were, rather, intended as raids on the caravans to rob their goods, and they argue that this kind of robbery was embedded in the nature of the people of the desert and that the Madinese were attracted by prospective booty to co-operate in violation of their pledge at al 'Aqabah. This is spurious reasoning, of course, and to be rejected outright. The people of Madinah were not people of the desert living on robbery and raids. Rather, like the people of Makkah, they had other sources of income and were motivated the same way as all

settled people who live on agriculture and trade. Such people do not make war except for an extraordinary and stirring purpose. On the other hand, the Muhajirun were entitled to seize Quraysh goods in retaliation for the goods which the Quraysh had seized from them. But they did not have recourse to such action before the battle of Badr. This was not, therefore, the reason for those expeditions. Besides, fighting had not yet been permitted in Islam. Neither Muhammad (P.B.U.H) nor his companions could have indulged in it for the nomadic purpose erroneously explained by the Orientalists. Fighting was permitted in Islam, and carried out by Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his companions, in order to stop their being persecuted for their faith and to have all the freedom they needed to call men to it. Later, when we see the details and the proofs of this, it will become clear that in all these alliances Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) purpose was the consolidation of the defense of Madinah. The objective was to remove Madinah beyond any design the Quraysh might have against its Muslim inhabitants. Muhammad (P.B.U.H) could not have forgotten that the Makkans once sought to extradite the Muslims from Abyssinia. At that time, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) did not see any objection at all to entering into a treaty of peace with Quraysh. Such a treaty would have stopped persecution, given him the freedom to call unto the new faith, and to witness for Allah unto all men.

Threat to the Jews

Perhaps, too, by these expeditions and armed sorties, Muhammad (P.B.U.H) sought to warn the Jews of Madinah and the neighboring area. We have already seen how, upon Muhammad's arrival (P.B.U.H) at Madinah, the Jews hoped to bring him into alliance with them and how, after befriending him and pledging to honor his freedom to practice and preach the

new religion, they had begun to oppose and plot against him. In fact, no sooner had Muhammad (P.B.U.H) settled down and the prospects of Islam had begun to improve, than the Jews, for their part, began their undeclared war against him. Their opposition and hostility were never open. Above all, they feared lest any harm might befall their trade; and, although they had fanned and fueled the fires of civil war in the past, they adeptly avoided every possible involvement. Henceforth, their covenant with Muhammad (P.B.U.H) at least prevented them from any such open involvement; and they recoursed to every hidden way to instigate enmity and hostility between the Muhājirun and Ansār so as to revive the old hatreds between al Aws and al Khazraj by reminding them of the day of Bu'āth in reciting the war poetry which had been composed on that occasion.

Jewish Plots

The Muslims realized what the Jews were about, for the latter were neither gentle nor discrete. Their instigation was always overdone. The Muslims accused those who entered into the Covenant of Madinah of hypocrisy, and classified them with the ***munafiqūn.*** Some Jews were once violently expelled from the mosque, and were later isolated and boycotted. After failing to convince them of the truth of Islam, the Prophet (P.B.U.H) let them alone. But to let them alone religiously did not mean that they should be allowed to instigate the Muslims to a civil internecine war. Politically speaking, it was not enough to warn them and to warn the Muslims of their instigation. It was necessary to impress them with the fact that the Muslims were sufficiently strong to stamp out any such war as the Jews were instigating as well as to uproot its causes. A good way for pressing this realization upon them was the sending out of Muslim forces on military expeditions in all directions on

condition that such sorties entail no actual fighting and no military setback. This account seems to be factual, for men like Hamzah, whom we know to have been quick to fly into a rage, turned around in front of the enemy without engagement. The appearance of an honored friend asking for peace is not enough to separate two parties either of which is bent upon fighting. Rather, non-engagement was a deliberate and carefully laid out plan. Its specific purpose was on one side to threaten and warn the Jews, and, on the other, to seek an understanding with the Quraysh to let the religious call take its course freely, without impediment or recourse to war or fighting.

Islam and Fighting

This peaceful show of strength by Islam does not at all mean that Islam, at that time, forbade fighting in defense of personal life and of religion, or to put a stop to persecution. Indeed, Islam did not. Rather, it imposed such defense as a sacred duty. What it did really mean at that time, as it does today or will ever do, was to condemn any war of aggression.

﴿ وَقَٰتِلُواْ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقَٰتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوٓاْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴾ سورة البقرة آية ١٩٠

(Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors.)
(Al-Baqarah: 190)

If, at that time, the Muhājirun felt justified in seizing the property of the Quraysh in retaliation for the latter's of their property when they emigrated, they certainly realized that to

protect the Muslims against apostasy from their faith was a greater duty in the eyes of Allah and His Prophet (P.B.U.H). The latter was the main purpose for the sake of which Allah had permitted the Muslims to fight at all.

'Abdullah ibn Jahsh's Expedition

The proof of the foregoing contention may be found in the expedition of 'Abdullah ibn Jahsh al Asadi, who was sent by the Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H) at the head of a number of Muhājirun in the month of Rajab of the second year A.H. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) gave him a document and asked him not to look at it until two days after the start of his journey. He was then supposed to follow its instructions without forcing any of his companions to comply with them. Two days after he started off, 'Abdullah, having unsealed the document, read the following instructions: "As soon as you have read this document, proceed to Nakhlah between Makkah and Ta'if, and there seek to learn for us the news of the Quraysh and their movements." When his companions learned that they were under no compulsion to go along with him, they all decided to do so except for Sa'd ibn Abū Waqqās al Zuhri and 'Utbah ibn Ghazwan, who preferred to look, on their own, for some of their camels which the Quraysh had seized. 'Abdullah and his companions proceeded as instructed. At Nakhlah, they saw a donkey caravan carrying trade goods for the Quraysh which were guarded by 'Amr ibn al Hadrami. The date was the end of the month of Rajab. Remembering the old persecutions of the Quraysh and the latter's seizure of their wealth and property, 'Abdullah ibn Jahsh, after consulting with his Muhājirūn companions, said: "Surely, if you allow the caravan to pass through tonight unmolested, they will reach the holy territory tomorrow and will thereby become forbidden to you. And yet, if you kill them today, you will have killed them in the holy month when killing is forbidden." The hesitant Muslims were afraid to attack the caravan; but, encouraging one another,

they agreed to kill whomever they could and to seize the goods in his possession. One of them shot an arrow at 'Amr ibn al Hadrami and killed him. The Muslims captured two men from the Quraysh.

Sedition Greater Than Murder (Tumult and oppression are wore than slaughter)

'Abdullah ibn Jahsh arrived in Madinah together with the two Quraysh captives and the donkey caravan loaded completely with goods. He had already earmarked one-fifth of the booty to the Prophet (P.B.U.H). But when the Prophet (P.B.U.H) saw them, he said: "I have not instructed you to fight during the holy months." He stopped the caravan in its place as well as the two captives and refused to take any part of the booty. He castigated 'Abdullah ibn Jahsh and his companions and, later on, they were further scolded and punished by their fellow Muslims for what they had done. The Quraysh seized the opportunity to spread the propaganda everywhere that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his companions had violated the sanctity of the holy month by having killed, robbed and captured. The Muslims of Makkah answered that the event had taken place not in the holy months but during the following month of Sha'bān. The Jews immediately joined the chorus of Quraysh propaganda with the hope of engaging the Muslims in a war with the Quraysh over a case in which the Muslims were apparently in the wrong according to Arabian custom. It was then that Allah revealed the judgment:

﴿ يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلشَّهْرِ ٱلْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ ۖ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ ۖ وَصَدٌّ
عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌۢ بِهِۦ وَٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِۦ مِنْهُ

أَكْبَرُ عِندَ ٱللَّهِۚ وَٱلْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ ٱلْقَتْلِۗ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَٰتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ

يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَن دِينِكُمْ إِنِ ٱسْتَطَٰعُوا۟ۚ ﴾ سورة البقرة آية ٢١٧

(They ask you concerning fighting in the Prohibited Month. Say: "Fighting therein is a grave (offence); but graver is it in the sight of Allah to prevent access to the path of Allah, to deny Him, to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque, and drive out its members." Tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter. Nor will they cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith if they can. And if any of you turn back from their faith and die in unbelief, their works will bear no fruit in this life and in the Hereafter; they will be Companions of the Fire and will abide therein.)

(Al- Baqarah: 217)

This Revelation brought the Muslims relief, and the Prophet (P.B.U.H) accepted his share of the booty. When the Quraysh sought to ransom the two captives, the Prophet (P.B.U.H) answered: "We shall not accept your ransom for the two captives unless you return our two men whom you have captured, namely Sa'd ibn Aba Waqqās and 'Utbah ibn Ghazwān. If you kill them we shall likewise kill your two men." Sa'd and 'Utbah were returned and the two Quraysh captives were released. One of them, al Hakam ibn Kaysan, was immediately converted to Islam and spent the rest of his life in Madinah. The other returned to Makkah where he remained to the end.

It is well worth our while to pause here for further consideration of the evidence which this expedition of 'Abdullah ibn Jahsh and the Qur'ānic verse, which was revealed in that connection, furnish for our generalization concerning the political theory of Islam. The event occurs as it were at the very crossroads of the development of Islamic policy. In kind, it is new. It points to a

spirit strong in its nobility, human in its strength, a spirit which orders the material, moral, and spiritual aspects of life very strictly while enhancing man's quest of perfection. The Qur'ān answered the question of the idolaters concerning whether or not fighting is permissible in the holy months and approved their view that it is a grave misdeed. But it also warned against something yet greater in its evil and immorality: that is to impede men from following the path of Allah and to deny Him, to stop men from entering the holy mosque, to expel the worshipers therefrom, or to sway and lure man away from his religion by promise, threat, bribery, and persecution. All these are greater misdeeds than fighting during the holy months or any months. The Quraysh and the idolaters who blamed the Muslims for killing during the holy months were themselves still fighting the Muslims by these means in order to compel them to renounce their religion. If the Quraysh and the idolators perpetrated all these misdeeds together, the victims of their misdeeds cannot be blamed for fighting during the holy months. Rather, the real misdeed is that of perpetrating these evils during the holy month against the innocent and the peaceful.

The Qur'ān and Fighting

Fitnah, or sedition, is a greater crime than murder. It is a right, nay a duty, of whosoever witnesses it, whether perpetrated against an individual or a whole community, to take up arms and fight for the sake of Allah and thus put an immediate end to it. It is here that the Orientalists and the missionaries raise their eyebrows and voices, shouting: "Do you see? Here is Muhammad (P.B.U.H) agreeing that his religion actually calls to war, to ***jihad*** in the cause of Allah, that is, to compel man by the sword to enter into Islam. Isn't this precisely what is meant by fanaticism? Now contrast this with Christianity, which denies

fighting and condemns war, which calls for peace and advocates tolerance, which binds men in bonds of brotherhood in Allah and in Christ. ." In arguing this point I do not wish to mention the statement of the New Testament, "I have not come to send peace but a sword.

" Nor do I want to analyze the meanings implicit in such statements. The Muslims understand the religion of Jesus only as interpreted by the Qur'ān. Rather, I want to begin by refuting the claim that Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) religion calls for fighting and coercion of men into Islam. That is a false accusation denied by the Qur'ānic judgment:

﴿ لَآ إِكۡرَاهَ فِي ٱلدِّينِۖ قَد تَّبَيَّنَ ٱلرُّشۡدُ مِنَ ٱلۡغَيِّۚ ﴾

سورة البقرة آية ٢٥٦

(Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error.)

(Al- Baqarah: 256)

﴿ وَقَٰتِلُواْ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقَٰتِلُونَكُمۡ وَلَا تَعۡتَدُوٓاْۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلۡمُعۡتَدِينَ ﴿١٩٠﴾ ﴾ سورة البقرة آية ١٩٠

(Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors.) (Al- Baqarah: 190)

The same directives are contained in a number of other verses.

War in the Cause of Allah

Jihad, or war for the sake of God, is clearly defined in the verses which we have mentioned and which were revealed in connection with the expedition of 'Abdullah ibn Jahsh. Its definite meaning is to fight those who sway the Muslim away from his religion and prevent him from walking in the path of Allah. This fight is waged solely for the freedom to call men unto Allah and unto His religion. To use a modern expression consonant with the usage of the present age, we may say that war in Islam is permitted—nay, it is rather a duty—when undertaken in defense of freedom of thought and opinion. All weapons used by the aggressors may be used against them. If somebody seeks to sway a man from conviction or opinion, and he effectively uses propaganda and logic without physical coercion, persecution, discrimination, or use of illicit means such as bribery, no man may stop him except by answering his argument and analyzing and exposing his logic. However, if he resorts to armed force to prevent a man from holding a certain opinion, then it becomes necessary to answer his armed power with equal armed power wherever practical. Man has no dignity if his convictions have none. Convictions are far more precious than wealth, position, power or life itself. Te those who appreciate the meaning of humanity, convictions are far more precious than the material life which man shares with the animals. If man's humanity consists of no more than eating and drinking, growing and struggling for survival, he is one with the animals. Man's spiritual and moral convictions constitute the moral bond which unites him to his fellow-men, the spiritual link between him and Allah. The life of conviction is man's great distinction from the animal kingdom. By it, man wills for his brother that which he wills for himself; by it, he inclines to share his wealth with the poor, the destitute, and the miserable, though such sharing may

implying some deprivation to his near relatives; by it, man enters into communion with the universe to perform that which enables the universe to realize the perfection which Allah has prescribed and established for it.

Should conviction take possession of a man and should another man attempt to make him renounce it under conditions in which self-protection or defense are impossible, such a man would do what the Muslims did before their emigration from Madinah, namely, to bear patiently all injury, persecution, and injustice. Neither hunger nor deprivation of any kind would cause him to succumb to ignoble desires; patient forbearance was precisely what the Muslims practiced in Makkah as well as what the early Christians had practiced. But those who suffer in patience for the sake of their convictions are not the majority of mankind nor the plebians among them. They are, however, the select and chosen few whom Allah has endowed with such moral strength that they are capable of standing up against any injury or injustice, however great. It was precisely this kind of conviction which the New Testament has associated with the judgment that whoever is endowed therewith "shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove." But if it is possible for man to defend himself against aggression with the same arms as the aggressor, to fight the man who blocks the path of Allah by use of his own means, then it is his duty to do so. Otherwise, one would be weak of faith and doubtful in conviction. That is what Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and his companions did after they had achieved a measure of security for themselves in Madinah. That is equally what the Christians did after they had achieved power in Rome and Byzantium, after the conversion of the Roman emperors.

Christianity and Fighting

The missionaries say, "But the spirit of Christianity condemns fighting altogether." I do not wish to pause here for investigating the truth, or lack of it, of such a claim. The history of Christianity, however, is a legitimate witness in this matter and so is the history of Islam. From the dawn of Christianity until today every country of the world has been soaked with blood in the name of Jesus Christ. The Romans and the Byzantines of old as well as the European peoples of modern times are guilty of shedding blood in religious causes. The Crusades were launched and their fires fanned by Christians, not by Muslims. For hundreds of years, one army after another rolled out of Europe in the direction of the Muslim Orient to fight, to destroy, and to shed blood. In every case, the popes who claimed to be the vicars of Jesus Christ, blessed and encouraged these armies and hurried them to Jerusalem and other destinations. Were all these popes heretics? Was their Christianity spurious? Or was every one of them a pretender, an ignoramus, unaware that Christianity absolutely condemns fighting? The missionaries rejoin, "Those were the Middle Ages, ages of darkness, unfit as evidence against Christianity." If this is an argument on which they pin some hope, let us then turn to the twentieth century in which we now live and which they call "the century of the highest human civilization." This century has indeed seen the same darkness as did the middle Ages. Lord Allenby, representing the allied forces of England, France, Italy, Rumania, and America, stopped in Jerusalem in 1918 after his conquest of that city toward the end of the first World War and said: "Today the Crusades have come to an end."

If in every age and period, there have been Christian saints who have condemned fighting and who rose to the pinnacles of human brotherhood—indeed, of brotherhood among all elements of the universe—so there were among the Muslims saints who have reached these very pinnacles and related themselves to all existence and being in a bond of brotherhood, love, and illumination and who realized within their souls the very unity of being. These saints, however, whether Muslim or Christian, do not represent human life in its constant development and struggle toward perfection. Rather they represent the highest example of the realization of that perfection. The general run of men, however, seek to understand and realize such perfection, but neither their reason nor their imagination succeeds in doing so with any amount of precision or completeness. Their attempts to realize it are understandable as preliminaries and trials. One thousand three hundred and fifty-seven years have so far passed since the emigration of the Arab Prophet (P.B.U.H) from Makkah to Madinah. Throughout these years men have increased their capacities to fight, improved their devilish art of war, and made its weapons more destructive than ever. However, disarmament and the cessation of war are still words of mere propaganda spread before the eyes of the credulous in war after war, each more devastating than the preceding. These noble ideals have hardly been more than propaganda claims made by people thus far incapable—and who knows, perhaps never capable of realizing any such desiderata, of bringing true peace into the world, a peace of brotherhood and justice instead of an armed peace which is only a preliminary to another war.

Islam, the Natural Religion

The religion of Islam is not one of illusion and fantasy. Neither is it a religion which addresses only the individual as such and urges him to rise to perfection. Rather, Islam is the natura religion, the religion which naturally belongs to all men, individuals as well as groups. It is the religion of truth, of freedom, and of order. As long as it is also the nature of man to fight and to make war, to discipline that nature and to limit this inclination within the narrowest frontier is all that is possible for men to bear and abide by it is all that humanity can hope to achieve in its struggle toward goodness and perfection. By far the best disciplining of this inclination to war is to limit it to pure defense of one's person, one's faith, one's freedom of opinion, and one's freedom to preach. The greatest wisdom is to regulate the making of war so that all the rights and dignities of man may be respected and observed to the utmost. And this is precisely what Islam has sought to do, as we have seen and as we shall have occasion to see later. That is precisely what the Qur'ān has commanded, as we have seen, and shall have occasion to see in the sequel.